

TALBOT HARLAND.

BY

HARRISON AINSWORTH.

AUTHOR OF "OLD ST. PAUL'S," "WINDSOR CASTLE," "ROOKWOOD," &c., &c.

WITH TEN ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY F. GILBERT.

LONDON:

JOHN DICKS, OFFICE OF "BOW BELLS," 213, STRAND.

1865.

TALBOT HARLAND.

A TALE OF THE DAYS OF CHARLES THE SECOND.

BOOK THE FIRST.

THE COURT AT TUNBRIDGE WELLS.

I.

SOMERHILL.

No mansion in Kent is more charmingly situated, or commands fairer prospects, than stately Somerhill. From its terrace, the views are enchanting, comprising gentle hills clothed with timber, lovely valleys, broad meads, housesteads innumerable, orchards, hop-gardens, and, at no great distance, the picturesque old town of Tunbridge, with its ruinous castle, and the Medway flowing past it. Beyond, rise the heights of Sevenoaks, and the long line of the Surrey hills. Tunbridge Wells, which lies in a hollow on the left, is hidden; but its position is marked by the heathy common beyond it, and by the villas crowning the hills. At the rear of the mansion, the prospect is far more extensive, and ranges over a vast and fertile plain, in the midst of which may be descried Canterbury, with the chalk downs near Dover in the extreme distance.

In the days of the Merry Monarch, in which our story is laid, the views from the terrace of Somerhill were even finer than at present, because there was nothing to mar the beauty of the landscape. A delightful air of seclusion pervaded the whole scene. There were more heaths, more woods, and fewer hedges. The prospect was wilder, but more pleasing.

In 1670, the precise date of our story, Somerhill could not boast of antiquity. It is old now; but still in excellent preservation. Built in the reign of James I. on the site of an older mansion, which had belonged to the mirror of knighthood, Sir Philip Sidney, and afterwards to Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Queen Elizabeth's favourite, at the period of

which we treat, it was the country residence of Lady Muskerrey, the famous "Babylonian Princess" of De Grammont, and had been bequeathed to her by her husband, the brave Lord Muskerrey, who was killed by the side of the Duke of York, in the great naval conflict with the Dutch in 1665.

The widowed lady of Somerhill was not a beauty—far from it. Very plain, very vain, she dressed outrageously; and being crazed on the subject of dancing, rendered herself an object of ridicule to the whole Court. Nevertheless, she was very good-humoured, and too even ridicule in good part—perhaps she did not perceive it; and being very rich and hospitable, her absurdities, though laughed at, were tolerated. Indeed, they afforded endless amusement to the Duke of Buckingham, Killigrew, Etherege, Sedley, and the other Court wits.

Lady Muskerrey was of an uncertain age, neither young nor old; short of stature, not particularly well made, but remarkably active; and she believed—and she had the King's word for it—that she danced and danced better than any other dame at Court—not excepting even the Duchess of Cleveland. Naturally, her wealth attracted many suitors, who were not deterred by her eccentricity; but as yet she had continued faithful to the memory of her valiant husband. Whenever Charles visited Tunbridge Wells with his Court, Somerhill was the scene of constant festivities, and nothing could be more sumptuous or agreeable than these entertainments.

Lady Muskerrey had latterly greatly increased her popularity at Court by providing the Queen with the loveliest maid of honour

that had been seen at Whitehall since the time of the belle Stewart, now Duchess of Richmond.

Dorinda Neville, Lady Muskerrey's niece and ward, was just nineteen when she was preferred to the enviable place by her Majesty Queen Catherine; and it was universally allowed that for grace, symmetry of person, and regularity of feature, she eclipsed all her predecessors. The Queen was delighted with her; for she had as much discretion as beauty, and her head was not turned by the adulations of even the highest personages. The wittiest of the courtiers wrote sonnets in her praise; and those who were less witty, but quite as eager to win her favour, paid her a thousand compliments; but neither wits nor empty compliments touched her heart, though they afforded her amusement.

We must endeavour to give her portrait, though only Lely could do justice to her charms. Dorinda Neville, then, was a blonde, with a delicately fair complexion, eyes of a tender blue, arched over by exquisitely pencilled eyebrows, and shaded by long eyelashes, lovely features, marked by a charming expression, a profusion of light tresses, and a slender but faultless figure. All her movements were full of grace, and she danced to admiration. Lady Muskerrey told the King, confidentially, that she had been her niece's sole instructress in dancing, and had taken a vast deal of pains with her.

"Oddsfish! I thought so," replied Charles, smiling. "She does your ladyship a vast deal of credit."

The lovely Dorinda Neville had not been long at Court—though quite long enough to cause innumerable heart-burnings and jealousies—when his Majesty's youngest sister, Henrietta, Duchess of Orleans, arrived on a visit to her royal brother. Henrietta, it may be proper to state, was married to Philip, Duke of Orleans, sole brother to Louis XIV., and at this time was not more than twenty-five, and possessed of great personal attractions. Poor princess! she could not foresee her fate, which was to die by poison, administered by her husband, not many weeks afterwards. The Duchess's visit, though apparently unexpected by Charles, had been preconcerted between them; in fact, she came on a secret mission from the French monarch. The Duchess of Orleans embarked at Dunquerque in the beginning of May, 1670, and was received by the King, in person, at Dover, and conducted by him to Whitehall, where a series of magnificent

fêtes were given in her honour. These *fêtes* derived additional attraction from the many French gentlemen and dames whom the Duchess had brought in her train. Foremost among the latter, for beauty and grace, was the dazzling Louise de Quéroualle; and if Louis had sent over the ambitious syren for the purpose of subjugating the amorous English monarch, he perfectly succeeded in his design. Charles at once fell into the snare. But Louise, though young, was an experienced coquette, and heightened the King's passion by feigned indifference to his suit.

II.

THE COUNT DE BELLEGARDE.

THE gayest and handsomest of the gallants in attendance upon the Duchess of Orleans was Count Achille de Bellegarde. This was not the Count's first visit to England. About three years previously, he was banished from the French Court for a scandalous intrigue, followed by a duel, in which the injured husband was killed; and he thereupon sought refuge at the English Court, where, notwithstanding his reputation, he was extremely well received. His agreeable manners and dissipated habits recommended him to the Duke of Buckingham, with whom, for some time, he was on the most intimate terms. But a quarrel occurred between them, of which the Duchess of Cleveland was the cause, and they met in Hyde Park, where the Count was wounded, though not dangerously.

Bellegarde's successes among the Court dames were almost as great as those of the irresistible Jermyn; and he had the credit of making both the King and the Duke of York jealous. But he was volatile as enterprising, and the loveliest woman could not retain him long in her fetters. His addiction to pleasure led him into great extravagances; and play being his usual resource, he was sometimes reduced to rather desperate straits. When driven to extremity, he resorted to the gaming-houses, and, associating himself with the rooks and sharpers, who seemed to regard him as one of their fraternity, soon managed to refill his purse. But these practices rather sullied his character, and made men of honour shy of playing with him. Luckily for himself, however, he was never detected in any trickery, though more than once charged by the exasperated losers with carrying loaded dice. But the rooks always sided with him—probably because they shared in his spoils. Bellegarde's admirable manners and address sur-

tained him at many a critical juncture. No man had greater self-possession; no man had greater powers of fascination. The Duchess of Cleveland openly avowed her partiality for him, and would have pensioned him, but for his inconstancy.

During his visits to the gaming-houses and the cock-pit, at Westminster, Bellegarde made acquaintance with the noted Colonel Blood, of Sarney, in the county of Meath—a desperado who had been exiled by the Duke of Ormond from Ireland for a rebellious attempt to surprise the Castle of Dublin. Several of the conspirators were hanged by Ormond, and their fierce leader vowed to avenge them by hanging the Duke at Tyburn. Hitherto, he had not found an opportunity of executing his threat. A man of great resolution, crafty as audacious, Blood not only possessed extraordinary effrontery, but great powers of persuasion, when he chose to exercise them. All his Irish property being confiscated, he was driven to the gaming-tables, where he encountered Bellegarde, to whom he took an amazing fancy; and having saved the Count's life, when the latter was set upon in Lincoln's Inn Fields, a strong friendship was cemented between them.

Colonel Blood was a widower, but he had a daughter, Sabine, who was then seventeen. After the adventure just referred to, he took the Count to his lodgings in a small street near Covent Garden, and the gay Frenchman then, for the first time, beheld the charming Irish girl. She was a sweet, unsophisticated creature, and being quite unaccustomed to compliments, blushed deeply at those paid her by the Count. Clearly he was smitten; for he called next day, and again saw Sabine.

Blood did not discourage his visits (though he had hitherto kept a careful watch over his daughter, and had suffered no gallants to approach her); for he had secretly resolved that she should become Countess de Bellegarde. At length, thinking the affair had gone quite far enough, perceiving that the fascinating Frenchman had gained her heart, he put on his most determined air, and told the Count that he expected him to marry his daughter. Bellegarde laughed, and replied that he had no idea of marriage. Blood looked as if he would have stabbed him on the spot; but said that if he did not make up his mind within three days to marry Sabine, he was a dead man.

Bellegarde easily extricated himself from this dilemma. When Blood galled for his decision, he found he had gone to Paris.

Luckily for the volatile Frenchman, his cousin, Louise de Quéroualle, had obtained his pardon from Louis XIV; and being now at liberty to return to the Court of Versailles, he took leave of his friends at Whitehall, kissed the King's hand, and departed for Paris. He did not trouble himself much about Blood, but he could not banish Sabine's image. Now that he had lost her, he discovered that the fair Irish girl had a hold upon his heart that no other had ever obtained. However, his regrets, though bitter, did not prevent him from engaging in froth affairs of gallantry, and he continued to play as deeply as ever; hoping, perhaps, to purchase forgetfulness by constant dissipation. In this he was mistaken, for Sabine's image never ceased to haunt him.

Two years passed by, when an opportunity of revisiting the scene of his former conquests and gaieties presented itself, and he eagerly embraced it. He hoped to see Sabine again, and felt sure she had remained constant to him. His cousin, Louise de Quéroualle, who was in great favour both with Louis XIV and the Duchess of Orleans, had procured him the post of gentleman-usher at the Palace of Saint Cloud; and when the Duchess was sent by the French King on the secret mission to Charles, Bellegarde accompanied her.

On the journey, he thought of nothing but Sabine, and pictured the raptures of a meeting with her; but sometimes a painful idea would intrude. What if she had died of grief at his desertion? On his arrival at Whitehall, his misgivings, if any remained, were quickly dispelled. In the courtyard, to his infinite surprise, he perceived Colonel Blood, apparently waiting for him. Mustering up all his assurance, he hurried up to the Colonel, who greeted him as if nothing untoward had happened. Blood looked in better case than formerly, and accounted for the improvement by saying he had lately gained a prize in the Royal Oak Lottery. Bellegarde congratulated him heartily, and then ventured to inquire after Sabine.

"She is looking better than ever," replied Blood.

"That I can easily believe," replied the Count. "But I trust she has not forgotten me?"

"Do you think my daughter would break an engagement?" rejoined Blood. "No. But you have taken two years, instead of three days, for consideration. Have you made up your mind?"

"I have come back expressly to marry her," replied Bollégarde.

It would take up too much time just now to describe the rapturous meeting between the gay fugitive and the deserted damsel. Suffice it, then, to say, that grief had not impaired Sabine's beauty. On the contrary, her charms had ripened during her lover's long absence.

Transported with delight, the Count threw himself at her feet; and after a few tears and gentle reproaches, was forgiven.

At the end of a week, the Duchess of Orleans was completely wearied with the pleasures and diversions offered her at Whitehall; but not having accomplished the object of her mission, even with the aid of her confidant, Louise de Quéroutalle, she could not return to St. Cloud, and so proposed a visit to Tunbridge Wells, of which she had heard such enchanting descriptions; and her wishes being seconded by Louise, Charles readily assented, and, on the very next day, the whole Court proceeded to the Wells.

The Duchess of Orleans and Mademoiselle de Quéroutalle were lodged at Somerhill. Lady Muskerrey had not much time to prepare for her distinguished guests; but she exerted herself to the utmost to give them a suitable reception. Magnificent rooms were assigned them, and accommodation was found in the large mansion for all the Duchess's ladies. The King was charmed with an arrangement that suited him exactly, and thanked her ladyship most heartily for her attentions to his sister.

III.

THE COURT BALL AT SOMERHILL.

On the evening after the Duchess's arrival at Somerhill, a grand ball took place, at which Charles and the whole Court assisted. Mademoiselle de Quéroutalle had never appeared so charming as at this entertainment; but though she dazzled all eyes by her sparkling attractions, there was one fair nymph who surpassed her in grace and beauty. Need we say that this was Dorinda Neville?

A Court ball in the days of the Merry Monarch was a splendid and picturesque sight. We will not institute invidious comparisons; we will not say that lords and ladies danced better then than now—but they did dance, with spirit as well as with grace. Their souls were in the performance; languor and listlessness were unknown, and there was no such thing as walking through a figure.

A prettier picture than that presented by the

ball at Somerhill cannot be conceived. Dancing took place in a large old-fashioned room—old-fashioned, even then. The costumes of the company, all of which were distinguished for richness, as well as variety of colour, materially added to the effect. Velvets and silks of all hues were blended together, and formed one harmonious whole. Never, sure, were described costumes more becoming, either for man or woman. Never was seen such a galaxy of beauty. To say nothing of the charming Dorinda Neville—of the bewitching Louise de Quéroutalle—of the sprightly, dark-eyed, dark-complexioned Duchess of Orleans,—there was the superb Duchess of Cleveland—the lovely Duchess of Richmond, who had proved so obdurate to Charles—Lady Bellasyse, Lady Denham, and fifty other beauties. The neglected Queen cannot be placed on this list—for, alas! she had few personal attractions; but she chatted good-humouredly with the lively Duchess of Orleans, and manifested no jealousy of the King's new favourite. In this self-command, her Majesty offered a marked contrast to the Duchess of Cleveland, who could not hide her rage, but glanced daggers at her rival.

Among the crowd of gallants congregated at the ball, the most conspicuous was the Duke of Buckingham. As usual, the Duke, who was the finest gentleman at Court, was distinguished by the magnificence of his apparel. His noble figure could be everywhere discerned, for he was taller almost by the head than any one in the room; and though he did not dance, he was perpetually moving about; now talking in a strain of refined gallantry to the Duchess of Orleans, anon inflaming the angry Cleveland's jealousy; now jesting with Rochester, Sedley, and Etherege, not even sparing Old Rowley himself in his sarcasms; then infuriating Sir John Denham by making love to his wife; now narrating some piquant Court scandal to the Earl of Falmouth, and Killegrew, who acted as master of the revels; now discussing a point of etiquette with Lords Breunker and Bath, and lastly addressing himself in the courtliest and most friendly manner to the Duke of Ormond, whom he hated, and whose removal from the government of Ireland he had caused by his intrigues.

Devoting himself exclusively to Louise de Quéroutalle, the King had eyes for no other beauty. He danced the bransle with her. His good-humoured Majesty had a real enjoyment in a brisk and animated dance; and though he went through a minuet and a cou-

ranto with inimitable grace, he greatly preferred the bransle, the passey, or a country-dance. So nimbly did he foot it on the present occasion, and so long did the bransle last—for Killegrew ordered the musicians to go on—that he fairly tired out his charming partner.

Of course, the Count de Bellegarde was present at the ball, though we have not hitherto mentioned him. Even in that brilliant assemblage, he was noticeable. His light and graceful figure was displayed to the greatest advantage by rich habiliments of the latest French mode. Until this evening, he had not seen the new maid of honour, and he wondered how so charming a creature could have escaped his observation. He begged Lady Muskerrey to present him to her charming niece, and he was presented accordingly. To his great mortification, Derinda received him very haughtily, and declined to give him her hand for the bransle. The thing might have passed off, for the Count could have easily concealed his chagrin; but Lady Muskerrey made matters worse by sharply reprimanding her niece, in tones loud enough to be heard by all around, telling her she ought to esteem it an honour to be selected as a partner by the Count de Bellegarde, the best dancer in Europe. To make him amends for the affront, she offered him her own hand, and the Count, amidst the titters of the bystanders, was forced to accept it.

Scarcely were they gone, when the handsome Talbot Harland, who was dying with love for Dorinda, though he had not ventured to breathe a word of his passion to her, came up and said, "I am very glad you refused to dance with that vain French coxcomb, Miss Neville; but may I ask your reason? No one else in the ball-room, I believe, would have refused him."

"Since you ask me, I will tell you," replied Dorinda, smiling. "I have conceived a positive aversion to him. He seems to think himself irresistible, and I was determined to mortify him."

"You have succeeded," said Talbot, laughing. "But mortify him still further by dancing with me."

"That may cause a quarrel," she objected.

"Never mind. I will cur his presumption."

Dorinda hesitated; but she gave him her hand, and they joined the couples that were whisking round the room.

Already sufficiently annoyed, by being made ridiculous by Lady Muskerrey, Bellegarde was

exasperated beyond measure by Talbot's mocking glances, as he swept past with Dorinda. But the Count promised himself speedy revenge.

Mademoiselle de Quéroualle had noticed the little incident just related, and she also saw the glances exchanged between her cousin and Talbot: and fearing a quarrel might ensue, she begged the King to interfere.

When the brawl was over, Charles called the Count to him, and, in a significant tone, forbade him to leave the ball-room. Bellegarde bowed profoundly, and retired from the presence.

Charles was still conversing with Louise, when the Duchess of Orleans approached them. As she drew near, all the surrounding company moved away to a respectful distance, except Louise, who was detained by the King. The discourse that ensued was conducted in French.

"I have news for your Majesty," observed the Duchess. "A courier has arrived this evening from St. Cloud."

"I hope the Duke, your husband, is in good health," remarked Charles, with a smile.

"The letter I have received is not from the Duke, but from his most Christian Majesty," replied the Duchess. "He peremptorily enjoins my immediate return, unless you consent to sign the treaty."

"We will talk about that to-morrow," replied the King, carelessly.

"To-morrow will be too late. The courier must depart at midnight. Instead of three millions of livres, Louis now offers you five millions a-year, if you will join him in the war he is about to declare against the Dutch States."

"Surely, your Majesty will not hesitate?" observed Louise.

"If that was the only article in the treaty, I should not hesitate for a moment," replied Charles. "But there are other conditions, that would render me little better than a vassal of France. I might as well sell myself to the Prince of Darkness."

"His most Christian Majesty would feel highly flattered, if he knew that you compared him to the Prince of Darkness," said the Duchess. "You do him wrong. He only desires a cordial alliance with England, and to unite inseparably the interests of the two crowns. Knowing that Parliament will not grant you fresh subsidies, he is disposed to make an immense sacrifice to help you."

"Would you have me become a pensioner of France?" cried Charles, impatiently.

"I would have you independent of Parliament," replied the Duchess. "Recollect this is a secret treaty."

"Oddsfish! the secret will come out, when I cease to ask for money," laughed the King.

"Then I am to understand that you decline?" said the Duchess. "Louise, you will prepare for departure to-morrow."

"I cannot allow you to take her with you," said Charles.

"Pardon me, your Majesty," said Louise; "I must return with her Highness."

"Rather than lose you, I will sign twenty treaties!" exclaimed Charles, passionately.

The Duchess glanced at her favourite, as much as to say, "Our point is gained." And she added, to the King, "I now know what to write to Louis."

The Duchess then inquired for the Count de Bellegarde, and Louise looked around for him. He was nowhere to be seen, and Talbot Harland had likewise disappeared. She mentioned the circumstance to the King, and his Majesty immediately signed to the Earl of Faversham, Captain of the Guard, and the Duke of Buckingham, who formed part of the circle around, and bade them go in search of the truants, and prevent mischief.

The Duchess then quitted the King, with the intention of sending off her despatch; and Charles proceeded with Louise to an adjoining room, where tables were set for ombre and basset.

Here a large company was assembled. The Duchess of Cleveland, who was immoderately fond of play, was seated at the basset-table, and the presence of her rival seemed to bring her ill-luck, for she lost a large sum of money. Charles counselled her to stop, but she persisted.

At last, her Grace got up in a rage, and asked the King to lend her two thousand pistoles. Charles shook his head, and the Duchess flung away from him with a look of disdain, and addressed herself to Lady Muskerrey, who chanced to come into the card-room at the moment, accompanied by Dorinda.

An interruption, however, was offered by the entrance of the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Faversham, followed by Bellegarde.

Dorinda turned very pale on beholding the latter.

"Where is Talbot Harland?" demanded Charles.

"We have been obliged to leave him behind," replied Buckingham.

"What has happened?—he is not hurt?"

cried Dorinda, unable to repress her emotion.

"You are the cause of the rencontre, Miss Neville," said Buckingham, regardless of her feelings.

"Methought I forbade you to leave the ball-room, Count?" said Charles to Bellegarde. "Is it thus that you obey me?"

"Let me intercede for him with your Majesty?" whispered Louise.

"I crave your Majesty's forgiveness," replied the Count; "but the doors being open, and the night magnificent, I could not resist strolling forth into the garden. I never supposed I should be missed."

"Did you stroll forth alone?" demanded the King.

"No, sire; Talbot Harland went with me!"

"By your invitation?"

"By my invitation, sire. I will not attempt to deny it."

"We were too late to prevent the conflict," interposed the Duke of Buckingham. "They were at it when we went out into the garden. We hurried to the spot; but before we could get up, the affair was ended. Talbot had dropped his sword."

"Then he is hurt?" cried Dorinda.

"Not much," replied Lord Faversham. "A slight wound—a mere scratch."

"Out of consideration for Miss Neville, I touched him as slightly as possible," said the Count.

A half-stifled cry was heard. Dorinda had fainted.

Lord Faversham caught her before she fell, and bore her out of the room, assisted by Lady Muskerrey, who was lavish in her attentions to her niece.

"Oddsfish! the secret's out!" exclaimed Charles. "Talbot is a lucky fellow. You have done him a great service, Count."

"I hope he will duly appreciate it," replied Bellegarde.

Shortly afterwards, Lady Muskerrey reappeared, with the satisfactory intelligence that her niece was better, but had withdrawn to her own room.

"I am amazed at what has happened," said her ladyship. "I had no idea she took so much interest in young Harland."

She then went to the Duchess of Cleveland, who had resumed her seat at the basset-table, and was still losing heavily to Lord Buckhurst.

"Your Grace shall have the two thousand pistoles," she said, in a low tone.

"I want four thousand now," replied the Duchess.

Lady Muskerrey was rather disconcerted; but she replied, "Anything to oblige your Grace."

"You are the best and kindest creature on earth," cried the Duchess; "and will lay me under eternal obligations. I shall be at home at six o'clock to-morrow. You know my little farm on Rusthall Common?"

"Perfectly. I will call on you about five o'clock, and bring the money with me."

This colloquy, though conducted in a low tone, did not escape the quick ears of the Count de Bellegarde.

Just then, an usher with a white wand presented himself, and announced to his Majesty that supper was served.

IV.

INTRODUCES CAPTAIN CLOTWORTHY AND MONSIEUR CLAUDE DUVAL, WITH THEIR COMPANIONS, MONTALT, MANDEVILLE, AND FLODOARD.

In a deep hollow at the northern extremity of Rusthall Common is a large group of rocks, several of which rise to a great height, and are so fantastic in shape, that it would seem that Dame Nature must have fashioned them in her wildest and most capricious mood.

The strangest of these huge stony masses, from its extraordinary form and position, placed as it is upon the apex of another rock, has been likened to an enormous toad, and certainly a resemblance to the reptile in question may be discovered. Indeed, it requires no great stretch of imagination to convert the whole group into a collection of antediluvian monsters.

In this rocky glen, which at that time had some of the savage features that Salvator Rosa loved to paint, on the afternoon of the day succeeding the Court-ball at Somerhill, four well-mounted horsemen were concealed. Two of them, who were evidently the leaders of the little troop, wore loupes, or black velvet masks, barred with silk, which completely disguised their features.

Both were equally well dressed, and wore scarlet riding-breeches embroidered with gold, boots fringed with lace, flowing perukes, and large low-crowned hats, surrounded with white feathers.

But they differed materially in personal appearance. One of them was square-built and athletic, and looked double the age of his companion, who was slender and gracefully proportioned. He was reclining indolently in his saddle, and beguiled the tedium of waiting

by some snatches of a French romance, which he sang with infinite taste, to the accompaniment of a mandolin, with which one of the troop was provided. His accent and manner left no doubt that the language in which he sang was his own. No Englishman could have so pronounced the words, or given them such charming effect.

On the high ground above the rugged sides of the hollow, and half-hidden by the furze and briars which grew there thickly, was a fifth horseman, who evidently acted as sentinel to those below.

What was the object of this ambuscade? The place chosen by the troop was favourable to concealment; but they could scarcely issue forth without discovery, for it was still early in the evening, and many persons were moving about the common,—a portion of which, about half a mile off, resembled an encampment, being covered by tents, occupied by the nobles and gentlemen belonging to the Court, who could not find accommodation in the thinly-scattered houses near the Wells. Here the Duke of York had pitched his tent. Here, also, the great Duke of Buckingham and Lord Arlington slept under canvas. Close to the encampment was a bowling-green, much resorted to by the Merry Monarch and his courtiers, and a large structure that served as an assembly-room. The Duchess of Cleveland had hired a farm-house in a more secluded part of the common, on the road to Langton. The King himself had a house, with a bowling-green attached to it, on Mount Zion.

Such being the state of Rusthall Common, which was then the gayest and most frequented spot near the Wells, it seemed extremely unlikely that the horsemen could be robbers. Most probably they were Court gallants, engaged on a frolic. We shall see.

The gay-looking young Frenchman, who, it appears, bore the name of Claude Duval, had just finished his song, and received the plaudits of his stalwart companion.

"Bravo, Monsieur Claude!" cried this personage. "You have a charming voice, and sing as well as the Count de Bellegarde. I would cry *encore* to your *maîtrigal*, if I did not think we might be interrupted."

"You flatter me immensely," replied Claude Duval, who spoke with a slight—very slight—French accent. "I cannot pretend to sing like my master, the Count de Bellegarde; but I can personate him pretty fairly, with the help of his wardrobe, with which I own I have

made free on the present occasion. I have often passed for him, even in the best society; and sometimes, I blush to say, have got him into scrapes. I hope I shall not do so now; but when he told me last night that the fair Dorinda Neville had refused to dance with him at Miladi Muskerrey's ball, I swore by my patron, Saint Barnabé, that the haughty beauty should dance with me. How to manage this was the question. My master had informed me that Miladi Muskerrey meant to call on the Duchess of Cleveland, at her farm on Rushhall Common, at a certain hour. I next ascertained that Miladi would take her lovely niece with her in the carriage. That was enough. I had my plan in an instant. Nothing more easy than to stop the carriage in a convenient spot. But I could not do this alone; so I applied to my staunch friend, Captain Clotworthy, who luckily chanced to be at Tunbridge Wells, with his honourable associates, Montalt—bowing to the galliard with the mandolin, who gracefully acknowledged the salute,—“Mandeville”—bowing to the other,—“and Floboard”—glancing at the horseman stationed on the heights above. “They readily promised me assistance, and here we are.”

“We are delighted to aid Monsieur Claude Duval,” observed Montalt. “Besides, the affair is one exactly after our own hearts. There is just hazard enough about it to render it agreeable.”

“And four thousand pistoles to be gained,” added Mandeville.

“My master informed me that Miladi Muskerrey will have that sum with her,” said Claude Duval. “She has promised to lend it to the Duchess of Cleveland, who was unlucky at basset last night, and has lost the amount to Lord Buckhurst. It is a debt of honour, gentlemen, and must be discharged without delay.”

“Then her Grace must apply to Old Rowley,” observed Clotworthy.

“Old Rowley's cassette is well-nigh empty; so my master says,” observed Claude Duval.

A laugh from all around followed this remark.

“Apropos of the Count—where is he at this moment?” asked Clotworthy.

“He ought to be in attendance on her Highness the Duchess of Orleans,” replied Claude.

“But heaven knows where he is. Hark! there is the signal!”

A whistle was heard, and the next instant Floboard shouted from above, “Get ready, gentlemen; the carriage is in sight.”

“Where is it?” demanded Clotworthy.

“Making its way across the common—on this side the tents,” rejoined Floboard.

“*Allons, messieurs!*” cried Claude Duval, gaily. “Take care not to frighten the ladies.”

The troop then quitted the rocky glen by an outlet at the rear; and after tracking a narrow road, between high banks, turned off on the left, and galloped along the skirts of a thicket that bordered the common on the west.

V.

LADY MUSKERREY.

NEVER, sure, save at the Lord Mayor's show in the olden time, was seen grander or more richly gilt chariot than that containing Lady Muskerrey and her lovely niece. The windows were so large, and the gorgeous vehicle was hung so low, that the ladies inside it could be distinctly seen. The horses were magnificently harnessed; a fat coachman occupied the box; and two tall footmen, powdered and bedizened with lace, hung on behind.

Lady Muskerrey was preposterously dressed in crimson satin, which, however, paled before the pink on her cheeks, and wore her hair, or rather peruke, *en negligé*. The collar, which fell over her shoulders, was of richest point, and her short sleeves were likewise adorned with deep falls of lace. Of course, she carried a fan—no lady of that day was ever without one—and her fan was prodigiously fine—the handle being of silver, with a small looking-glass set in it. On her lap rested a small spaniel—a present from the King—whose long silken ears, and large, soft eyes, proclaimed his perfect breeding. At her feet was deposited a heavy bag, the contents of which will be readily surmised.

Dorinda was just as becomingly dressed as her aunt was the reverse. Everything she wore seemed to suit her charming figure; and nothing could suit her better than the little coquettish hat, with a red plume in it, that crowned her luxuriant blonde tresses.

The lovely girl was in high spirits, and her blooming features bore no traces of fatigue. The afternoon was exquisite, and she had immensely enjoyed the drive from Somerhill to the Wells. The charming views had enraptured her.

At the Wells they had alighted, and walked along the parade, where a tolerably large company was assembled—some drinking the waters, but the majority promenading to and

fro, and listening to the strains proceeding from an orchestra.

Very different, it is needless to say, was the appearance of the place from that which it now presents. A few sheds, temporarily converted into shops, ran along one side of the promenade. On the other side, benches were placed under the trees. Still, the scene was extremely gay and amusing—especially at morn, when the King, with all the gallants and ladies of the Court, resorted thither to drink the waters.

Scarcely had Lady Muskerrey and her niece set foot on the parade, than they were joined by Talbot Harland. The young man had his right arm in a sling, but did not otherwise seem much the worse for his rencontre overnight with Bellegarde. Dorinda blushed deeply on beholding him, and her confusion was heightened by Lady Muskerrey, who chided him for the anxiety he had caused her niece. Talbot expressed his concern, but his looks showed that he was far from sorry.

"My defeat has made me the subject of a hundred jests," he said; "and the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Feversham tell me I ought never to have provoked so expert a swordsman as the Count; but I rejoice that I did so, since it has procured me——"

He was proceeding in this strain, when Dorinda interrupted him by saying, "But the Count might have killed you."

"In that case, tears from your bright eyes would have been shed for me," said the young man.

"I am afraid some one's heart would have been broken," remarked Lady Muskerrey. "Well, I hope this absurd affair won't proceed further."

"Yes; if I have any influence with Mr. Talbot Harland, he won't provoke the Count again," said Dorinda, with a tender glance at her lover.

"You are of the same opinion, I find, as the Duke of Buckingham, and think that I should infallibly be worsted," laughed Talbot. "Rest easy. I met the Count not two hours ago, and he expressed so many regrets at having hurt me, and behaved altogether so handsomely, that—in a word, we became friends."

"The Count is a most charming man, and dances imitably," cried Lady Muskerrey.

"Perhaps so," said Dorinda; "but he shall never dance with me—on that I am fully resolved."

"I should think he will not presume to ask

you again," remarked Talbot. "That, indeed, might furnish a new ground of quarrel."

"You silly child, you will cause more mischief!" cried Lady Muskerrey, tapping her niece playfully with her fan. "But we must not stay here longer. 'Tis time to go to the Duchess of Cleveland."

"Her Grace, I hear, lost a large sum last night to Lord Buckhurst, and made the King very angry," remarked Talbot, with a laugh. "Buckhurst, however, thinks he will never be paid."

"Yes, he will; I will promise him that," said Lady Muskerrey. "I mean to lend her Grace the money."

"Then your ladyship will be the loser, and not Buckhurst."

Talbot attended them to the carriage; and as he offered his uninjured arm to Dorinda, he whispered, "I shall ride up to Rusthall Common presently, and hope to catch a glimpse of you as you come back."

VI.

HOW CLAUDE DUVAL DANCED A GAILLARDE WITH DORINDA NEVILLE.

THE heath adjoining Tunbridge Wells, which is now traversed by numerous roads, was then very wild and picturesque—clothed with gorse, and with only two or three shepherds' huts upon it.

Lady Muskerrey's stout horses managed to drag the heavy carriage up the toilsome ascent, along a road that was little better than a sheep-track; and at last landed it safely on the brow of the hill, near Bishop's Down, at the back of which, among the woods, stood a large mansion, which the King had occupied during his former visits to the Wells, but he had now transferred himself to Mount Zion. Thence the road to Rusthall Common—which, in fact, was merely a continuation of the heath—was tolerably level, and offered no difficulties.

Dorinda was lost in admiration of the magnificent prospect that was here spread out before her; and was still contemplating it, when the wide common opened upon them. There was nothing dreary about the waste. On the contrary, it presented as charming a picture as can well be conceived.

About half a mile off was the encampment, and the flags of the numerous tents were fluttering in the soft evening breeze. On the left was Rusthall Church—an ancient structure, with a few cottages near it. On the green, in front of the church, rustic sports were going

on; and the shouts and uproarious laughter of the crowd collected on the spot could be distinctly heard. Mingled with these shouts arose a confused hum of voices from the tents, and numbers of persons could be seen moving about in their vicinity.

Lady Muskerrey promised her niece that she would pass through the encampment on her way back. In the meantime, the coachman turned off on the right; and the road being execrable, he kept as much as he could on the turf.

Presently, the scene became solitary enough. The clumps of gorse grew thicker and more frequent. The tinkling of a sheep-bell was the only sound heard. The encampment was lost to view, and the square tower of Rusthall Church alone marked the site of the village.

However, the prospect improved as they went on; and shortly after they entered the wood, the prettiest sylvan scene imaginable greeted them.

It was a patch of greensward, smooth as velvet, and level as a bowling-green; in the midst grew a noble oak-tree, with wide arms flung abroad. An air of complete seclusion was given to this lovely spot by the thickets that surrounded it.

The picture was completed by a little troop of horsemen gathered beneath the patriarchal oak. The disposition of these figures was charming, and might have been studied for effect, so well did they harmonize with the scene.

The attention of the ladies was naturally attracted to the party, while sounds of music caught their ears. One of the horsemen had dismounted, and was playing a mandolin, while leaning against the gnarled trunk of the tree. Both ladies were enchanted with the picture thus unexpectedly presented to their view. Nor were they in the least surprised or alarmed, when two of the horsemen, whose attire seemed superior to that of the others, detached themselves from the group, and rode towards the carriage.

Both these personages were masked. Still, that circumstance did not cause uneasiness.

At a sign from the foremost horseman, who was the most stalwart of the two, the coachman stopped; and the next moment, this individual, presenting himself at the open window of the carriage, bowed most respectfully to its occupants, but did not remove his visard.

"You do not mean to molest us, I hope, gentlemen?" said Lady Muskerrey.

"Molest you! no! for worlds!" rejoined the

stalwart personage. "I recognised your carriage the very instant it appeared, and could not neglect the opportunity of paying my respects to your ladyship and your lovely niece."

"Your voice does not seem familiar to me," replied Lady Muskerrey; "but perhaps if you unmasked——"

"Your ladyship would not know me, for I have not had the honour of being presented to you. You must have heard Lord Muskerrey speak of Captain Clotworthy. I am the Captain, and your ladyship's most humble servant. Without boasting, I may say that his lordship was extremely partial to me. In his good-natured, familiar way, he always called me Jack. 'Jack,' he said to me one day, when we were crushing a flask of Rhenish together in the Mulberry Garden,—'Jack, I am proud of my wife—excessively proud of her.' 'No wonder, my lord,' I replied. 'Her ladyship is the handsomest and best-dressed woman at Court.' 'So she is, Jack,' he said; 'but that's not the reason I'm proud of her. Her ladyship dances better than any other woman in England. You ought to see her dance the gavotte. You'd never forget it.'"

"Did the poor, dear fellow say that?" cried Lady Muskerrey, unable to conceal her delight.

"On my honour," replied the Captain. "But he said something more; and I hope I sha'n't offend your ladyship by repeating it. Just before he sailed in that glorious expedition against the Dutch in '65, he shook hands with me at parting, and made me this farewell promise, which I feel sure he would have kept, if he could. 'Jack,' said he, 'if I come back safe and sound, you shall dance a gavotte with my lady.'"

"I declare, Captain, you quite affect me," said her ladyship, taking out her handkerchief. "Since my husband made you this promise, I am bound to fulfil it. You shall dance the gavotte with me whenever you please."

"No time like the present," cried Clotworthy. "Here is a piece of turf that a fairy might trip on, and it will just suit your ladyship, who is as lightfooted as a fairy."

"A charming spot, indeed," said Lady Muskerrey, in a tone that implied assent.

"Surely, my dear aunt, you won't do anything so absurd?" remonstrated Dorinda, in a low voice.

"My love, I owe it to your uncle's memory," replied her ladyship.

"Take the carriage somewhat nearer to

yonder oak, coachman," cried Clotworthy. "The ladies are about to alight."

The order was obeyed. Clotworthy and Claude Duval rode on either side of the carriage till it reached the spot indicated. They then dismounted, and gave their horses to Mandeville and Flodard.

"By your leave," said the Captain, pushing the footmen aside, and assisting her ladyship to alight.

"Allow me to present Monsieur Claude Duval," continued Clotworthy, as the young Frenchman, whose graceful deportment had already attracted the attention of both ladies, came towards them. "He does not speak our language very well; but he can make himself understood."

"Have you been long in England, Monsieur Duval?" said Lady Muskerrey, as the young Frenchman bowed to her.

"More than a year, milady," he replied; "and I mean to remain. I prefer London to Paris—*les dames Anglaises sont si belles, si gracieuses, si aimables.*"

"You have found them so, eh, Monsieur Duval? But you have lovely women in France. There is a charming specimen now at Court—Mademoiselle de Quéronalle."

"She is not to be compared to your ladyship's lovely niece," replied Duval, gallantly. "Will not Mademoiselle Neville alight?"

"Pray do, my love!" cried Lady Muskerrey.

Duval flew to the carriage-door; and not wishing to disoblige her aunt, Dorinda alighted, though with evident reluctance. The little spaniel was confided to the care of one of the tall footmen.

Meanwhile, Clotworthy conducted her ladyship to a spot where the turf was smoothest, and called out to Montalt, who remained near the tree, to play a gavotte—"The quickest you can," added the Captain.

Lively notes from the mandolin were heard in immediate response to the order. Lady Muskerrey summoned up all her airs and graces, and determined to astonish her partner.

"May I have the honour of dancing with mademoiselle?" said Duval, bowing respectfully. "It is a mere frolic, in which she can join without the slightest impropriety."

Dorinda did not feel quite sure of that.

"Mademoiselle cannot hesitate to follow the example of her aunt, who is a model of discretion," continued Duval.

"Well, I don't think there can be any great harm in a dance," said Dorinda.

So she gave him her hand. With what secret triumph he took it!

Seeing that all was arranged to his comrade's satisfaction, Clotworthy clapped his hands, and the dance commenced.

Rarely has such a dance been witnessed. Lady Muskerrey surpassed all her previous performances in extravagance and absurdity. How she skipped and bounded!—displaying an agility perfectly marvellous in a person of her years and figure. The Captain found he had undertaken no light task; but he was obliged to go through with it.

Montalt, who entered into the fun of the scene, played as fast as he could. His companions were ready to split their sides with laughter. The two tall footmen had enough to do to contain their merriment, and the fat coachman chuckled internally.

Dorinda spread her fan before her face. Claude Duval's mask effectually concealed his laughter. Her ladyship would have gone on for ever, but the Captain gave in at last.

"Lord Muskerrey was right!" he cried, panting with the exertion. "I challenge all England to produce such another dancer as your ladyship."

"You may challenge all France as well, *mon cher!*" added Claude Duval. "But let us finish with a pavane and gaillarde."

Lady Muskerrey was quite ready—quite eager, indeed, to recommence; but the Captain did not feel equal to further effort.

The field was, therefore, left to Duval and his fair partner. Dorinda required little persuasion to go on: she excelled in the pavane.

Montalt changed the measure, and the slow and stately dance began. Laughter was now changed to admiration. Dorinda never looked so well—never danced so gracefully. How proudly she advanced towards her partner; and, with a courtly air, he received her. It was a charming sight to watch them. Lady Muskerrey was a little mortified at being left out, but she could not withhold her tribute of admiration.

Again the measure changed, and the movements of the dancers became brisk and rapid. The gaillarde was Duval's triumph. The spectators were in ecstasies as the lively dance proceeded.

No ballet even offered a prettier *tableau* than the scene now presented. What with the two graceful central figures, the groups around them, the richly-gilt coach, the horses of the troopers, and the old oak tree in the background, the picture was perfect.

Amid the applause of the beholders, the gaillarde came to an end.

Thanking her ladyship for the honour she had done him, Captain Clotworthy ceremoniously conducted her to her carriage.

Lady Muskerrey would fain have remained a little longer to dance a couranto with Monsieur Duval, with whom she was charmed; but the Captain, who had other business in hand, as the reader is aware, and feared interruption, gave her no encouragement.

Most assiduous was the Captain in seeing that her ladyship was comfortably seated; he arranged her dress, and placed the little spaniel on her lap. On Dorinda's approach, he made way for her, of course; and Duval noticed that his left arm was carefully covered by his mantle.

Dorinda's curiosity was aroused to know something more of her partner. There was a mystery about him that perplexed her. Throughout the dance he had kept on his mask, and even now he did not seem inclined to remove it.

"Do you always wear a mask, Monsieur Duval?" she inquired, gaily.

"Always, mademoiselle," he replied. "I have the misfortune to be very ugly, so I hide my countenance as much as possible."

"Perhaps you do yourself an injustice. At least, allow us to judge."

"Excuse me, mademoiselle; I would not shock you."

"Then I shall not know you, if we meet again."

"We are not likely to meet again," he rejoined, with a sigh. "I do not belong to the Court; but I never shall forget this occurrence. It is the most agreeable event of my life!"

He banded her to the carriage, bade her adieu, bowed gracefully to Lady Muskerrey, and hastened to rejoin his companions, who were all mounted and ready for departure.

Springing into his saddle, he again took off his feathered cap, and waved it to those within the carriage.

In another instant the whole troop had disappeared, as if by magic.

VII.

THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND'S FARM.

"WHAT an amusing incident—quite like a scene in a play!" exclaimed Lady Muskerrey. "It will divert his Majesty prodigiously, though he will think I have invented it, for it does seem highly improbable that we should have met with such a charming dancer as this

Monsieur Duval. What spirit he threw into the gaillarde! Never did I see a piquette turned so prettily. He rivals, if he does not surpass, the Count de Bellegarde."

"Since you have mentioned him, aunt, I must tell you that a suspicion once crossed me that it might be the Count himself."

"Ridiculous! Had he been the Count de Bellegarde, I should have recognised him immediately."

"But the mask, aunt?"

"Bah! his voice would have betrayed him."

They had emerged from the wood, and were approaching the Duchess of Cleveland's farm, which was beautifully situated on the slope of a hill.

Suddenly, Lady Muskerrey made a discovery, and called out to the coachman to stop.

"What's the matter, aunt?" asked Dorinda.

"I have been robbed!" rejoined her ladyship, in distraction. "The bag of money is gone!"

"Heavens! I hope not," cried Dorinda.

Just then, one of the footmen appeared at the door, to learn her ladyship's commands.

"I have been robbed, Kynaston—robbed of four thousand pistoles."

"Is it possible, my lady?" cried Kynaston, aghast. "Who would have believed that such fine gentlemen could be robbers?"

"Bid the coachman turn back. I shall never be able to face the Duchess. She won't credit the story."

"Begging your ladyship's pardon, don't you think we had better go on to the farm, and send some of the Duchess's men in pursuit of the robbers?"

Lady Muskerrey agreed, and the carriage went on.

The Duchess of Cleveland was in the garden when they arrived, and on hearing what had occurred, gave instant orders that several of her servants should mount, as quickly as they could, and scour the country round. Though naturally much disappointed, her Grace was consoled by Lady Muskerrey's promise that she should have the money, whether the robbers were captured or not. She laughed heartily at the adventure, and said it was almost worth while to be robbed by such a gallant as *Comte Duval*.

"He had quite the air of a gentleman. I can assure your Grace," said Lady Muskerrey. "And his dancing of the gaillarde was inimitable."

"In my opinion, it will turn out a mere piece of pleasantry," remarked the Duchess.



CLAUDE DUYAL ROBS THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND. (See page 21.)

"We shall hear something more of the beau Duval, ere long."

Lady Muskerrey and Dorinda had been about half an hour with the Duchess, when Lord Buckhurst and Talbot Harland rode up to the gate. Who should be with them but the Count de Bellegarde!

The three gentlemen tied their horses to the rails, and joined the ladies in the garden.

Any suspicions that Dorinda might still entertain as to the Count's identity with Claude Duval were now dissipated.

They were both about the same height, certainly, and both slightly but gracefully proportioned, but Bellegarde's costume was totally different from that of the gallant robber. He wore a green velvet riding-dress, richly embroidered with silver lace, while Claude Duval was attired in scarlet. Duval's peruke was black—the Count's, on the contrary, light and powdered. Lastly, and most convincing of all, his voice, when he addressed the Duchess, who received him graciously, was totally unlike Duval's. The robber had a marked peculiarity of accent, that proclaimed him a Gascon.

"Your Grace will be surprised to see me," said Bellegarde, in his airy manner, to the Duchess; "but Lord Dorset would bring me on with him. He picked me up at the bowling-green on Rushall Common, where I had been playing for some time, with very bad luck. *Je suis tres mauvais joueur à la boule.* On our way to your Grace's farm—which I have never seen before, and which I find charming—une campagne délicieuse dans un pays ravissant—we overtook Mr. Talbot Harland, who, I rejoice to say, has quite forgotten our little quarrel of last night. We are now the best friends possible. Is it not so?"

Talbot bowed in assent.

"You could not have come more apropos, Count," rejoined the Duchess. "Possibly, you can give us some information respecting a countryman of yours—a certain Claude Duval."

"Claude Duval!" exclaimed the Count. "I regret that I cannot help your Grace. I never heard of him. What has he done?"

"Robbed Lady Muskerrey of four thousand pistoles in the wood, close to this place, not an hour ago."

"Is it possible, miladi?" cried Bellegarde, turning to Lady Muskerrey.

"Perfectly true, Count," she replied.

And she hastened to recount the adventure,

describing it in a manner that provoked the merriment of all her hearers, except Talbot Harland, who felt excessively annoyed that Dorinda should have danced with a robber.

"Parbleu! a most extraordinary affair!" exclaimed the Count, when her ladyship had finished. "This Duval is a reproach to my country."

"The thing has been so cleverly executed, that I almost hope the rascal may escape," laughed Lord Buckhurst.

"He must not be allowed to escape!" cried Talbot. "Success will embolden him to attempt further audacious exploits of a like character."

"He will rob all the Court ladies," said the Duchess.

"And dance with them afterwards," added Lord Dorset.

"Diantre! s'il fait ça il doit payer bien les violons," said Bellegarde.

"One would almost think you are jealous of his success, Count," observed the Duchess.

"Can I be otherwise, after what has happened?" he rejoined. "Miss Neville refused to dance with me, but has honoured the *drôle* with her hand."

"It was monstrous presumption on the rascal's part to ask her!" cried Talbot. "And I almost wonder Miss Neville condescended——"

"My niece danced with him to oblige me," interrupted Lady Muskerrey, sharply.

"Well, it appears that he acquitted himself very satisfactorily," said Lord Buckhurst, laughing.

"He acquitted himself admirably," rejoined her ladyship. "He was politeness itself."

"Ma! ha! charming!" exclaimed Lord Buckhurst.

"As to taking him for a robber," pursued Lady Muskerrey, "I should as soon take the Count de Bellegarde for one."

"I appreciate the compliment," said the Count, bowing.

At this juncture, the Duchess's servants were seen returning from their ineffectual quest.

Presently, one of them came to inform the Duchess that they could discover no traces whatever of the robbers. Apparently, no one had seen them.

"This is very strange," remarked Lord Buckhurst. "How the deuce can they have got off?"

"That remains to be explained," said Talbot.

Lady Muskerrey now took leave of the

Duchess, and observed in an undertone, "As I have said, your Grace shall be no loser by this occurrence. I will send you the money."

"Pray don't trouble yourself to do that," rejoined the Duchess. "I shall be at your second ball to-morrow night. If your ladyship will oblige me with it then, I can bring it away with me."

"It shall be ready for your Grace; but you may be robbed."

"No fear of that," laughed the Duchess. "No one will think I have so much money with me."

"That's what puzzles me!" said her ladyship. "How did Monsieur Claude Duval, or his associate, Captain Clotworthy, know that I had four thousand pistoles in the carriage?"

"Perhaps, one of your footmen is in league with them," replied the Duchess.

Was almost fancy that this brief colloquy—though conducted, as we have said, in a low tone—was overheard by Bellegarde.

Lady Muskerrey and her niece then re-entered the carriage, and the three gentlemen escorted them through the wood.

A short halt took place on the scene of the recent adventure, and her ladyship again described some of the principal incidents.

"I would give worlds to have seen it," laughed Lord Buckhurst.

"And I would give worlds for the chance of shooting the impudent rascal!" cried Talbot.

VIII.

THE KING TAKES AN EARLY WALK, AND MEETS WITH A PLEASANT ADVENTURE.

CHARLES THE SECOND was fond of all kinds of exercise, and all sorts of country sports. He did not hunt so much as his brother, the Duke of York; but he liked coursing, hawking, and angling. His favourite games were tennis and bowls. At Whitehall, he had a splendid bowling-green and a large tennis-court. His Majesty preferred walking to riding, because he thought foot exercise kept him in health; and he walked so fast that few of his courtiers could keep up with him. When he was staying at Tunbridge Wells, he always rose very early, and rambled for miles over the heaths and commons in that pleasant region, wholly unattended, returning to drink the waters at the salubrious spring.

On the second morning after his arrival at the Wells, he was sitting at his usual early hour, and awoke Chiffinch, his confidential valet, who slept in the ante-chamber. Having assisted

his royal master to make his toilet, Chiffinch went to bed again.

According to his wont, Charles, who did not desire to be recognised in his walks, had put on very plain apparel, such as might become a plain country gentleman. Sometimes, he took with him three or four little spaniels; but on this occasion his long-eared favourites were left behind.

With no other protection than the gold-headed cane in his hand, he set off at a brisk pace from his mansion on Mount Sion. To look at him in his cloth doublet, trunk hose of the same material, and hat without feathers, as he strode vigorously along with anything but a regal deportment, no one would have taken him for England's King.

Remonstrances were often addressed to his Majesty on the danger he ran in taking these walks unattended; but he heeded them not. He had no fears, and liked, occasionally, to be alone.

Descending Mount Sion, on the brow of which stood the mansion he had just quitted, amidst a grove of rock-haunted trees, he passed the little collection of huts near the Wells, and climbed the heath in the direction of Mount Ephraim.

It was a delightful morning, and as the King inhaled the fresh breeze, he rejoiced that he had come forth. Already he had shaken off the fatigues of the night, which had been devoted to a concert given in the rooms near the encampment.

When he gained the summit of the hill, he met several cherry-cheeked country lasses with baskets of eggs, butter and poultry, proceeding to the tents on Rusthall Common; and none of these damsels passed without a good-humoured jest from his Majesty, which sent them laughing on their way. For every one he encountered in his walk he had a cheery greeting.

Still keeping on the top of the hill, he pursued the road leading to Southborough for some half-mile, when, being tempted by a pleasant-looking lane on the left, he turned into it.

He had not gone far when he descried two persons advancing along the lane, and the unexpected appearance of one of them in such a spot caused him to stop. The person he beheld was the Count de Bellegarde. With him was a maiden, whose beauty surprised the King. Her attire was simple and becoming, but gave no indication whatever of her rank. How could the Count have discovered this

lovely creature? That he had won her regard, was evident from her manner towards him.

So engrossed were the pair with each other that they did not notice the King, who sprang up a bank, and concealed himself among the bushes. The pair came slowly on, and passed the spot where he was hidden, but he could not hear what they said. The accents of the damsel were indescribably sweet.

She did not accompany her lover much farther; but after bidding him a tender adieu, turned back, and repassed the King with quick footsteps.

Charles, whose curiosity as to this mysterious fair one was greatly excited, was determined to follow her, but when he came forth from his retreat, she had disappeared. However, he felt certain she could not be far off, and hurried on.

Presently he came in sight of a farmhouse, with a barn and hop-kiln attached to it, and at the porch of this habitation he perceived the fair object of his search.

She seemed surprised and almost alarmed by the appearance of a stranger, and would have retired if he had not addressed her. The blush that suffused her cheek made her look more charming than ever.

Charles had had some experience in beauty, but he confessed to himself that he had never beheld a lovelier creature. She had by no means a rustic air; her features were delicately moulded, and her figure slight and graceful; her complexion was clear, but embrowned by the sun. She had the largest black eyes imaginable, and raven tresses that threw those of Louise de Quénouille into the shade.

"Give you good-morrow, fair damsel," said the King, saluting her. "You look as if you would not refuse me a bowl of milk and a crust of bread wherewith to break my fast. I have walked thus far from the Wells, and feel somewhat exhausted.

"Step in, I pray you, sir," she rejoined, displaying a casket of pearls as she spoke. "You shall have what you desire."

On this invitation, Charles went in, and found himself in a large, plainly-furnished room, with a low roof and latticed windows. Doffing his hat, he sat down on a settle placed near a ponderous oak table on one side of the room.

Spreading a snow-white napkin on the board the damsel brought him the simple refreshments he had asked for, serving them with much grace.

"I seldom drink milk," said the King,

raising the bowl to his lips; "but proffered by hands so fair, I prefer it to wine."

"You asked for milk, sir, or I would have brought you wine," she rejoined. "Will it please you to drink a cup of sack now? Or if a flagon of ale will suit you better, you can have it."

"Oddsfish! this is a hospitable house," exclaimed Charles. "One has only to ask and have. But neither ale nor sack for me, fair damsel. Surely, you do not dwell here alone?"

"No, sir," she replied with a smile. "My father lives with me."

"Then you are not yet married?"

"Married? Oh, no, sir."

"But you soon will be; for I met a handsome young gallant just now in the lane, and I'll swear he came from this house."

This remark threw her into such confusion, that Charles hastened to reassure her.

"Nay, be not alarmed," he said. "Your secret is safe with me. Where is your father, if I may venture to put the question?"

"He went to Maidstone last night," she replied.

"To Maidstone? Ha!" cried the King.

"Yes; but I expect him back early this morning."

"In time for breakfast?" remarked Charles, laughing. "But you have not yet told me your father's name."

"It is Reuben Oldacre."

"Reuben Oldacre—ha! And your own?"

"Violet."

"Violet! A charming name, and suits you exactly. And now, fair Mistress Violet, cannot you tell me something more about yourself? How do you pass your time? I warrant me you have been to the Wells since the Court arrived there, to see the fine ladies drink the waters? Have you seen the King?"

"I have no desire to see him," she replied.

"I am told he is as swarthy as a griffy. I crave your pardon, sir; I did not notice that you are so dark."

Charles laughed good-humouredly.

"Dark-complexioned men sometimes find favour with your sex," he remarked. "Swarthy as I am, I have no reason to complain. But if you don't admire the King, I'll stake my life that he would admire you."

"I don't want his admiration," she rejoined.

"They say he has fallen in love with the new French beauty, Louise de Quénouille."

"This comes from Bellegarde," thought Charles, as he heard of Mademoiselle.

selle de Quérroualle? Well, I have seen her, and can judge, and I affirm that she is not to be compared to you. Perhaps you have heard of Sir Peter Lely, the famous Court painter?"

"Yes; I have not only heard of him, but have seen his portraits of the Duchess of Cleveland and the beautiful Miss Stewart, and lovely pictures they are."

"You would make a lovelier picture than either of them, my sweet Violet. Sir Peter Lely is coming down to the Wells to paint Mademoiselle de Quérroualle for the King. He shall paint you."

Violet did not seem displeased by the proposition, extravagant as it sounded. Her vanity was roused.

"Ah, it would, indeed, be delightful to be painted by Sir Peter Lely!" she exclaimed, her dark eyes flashing as she spoke. "But you are only jesting with me, sir. It is easy to make fine promises, but difficult to keep them."

"Not difficult on my part, sweetheart," rejoined the King. "Lely shall paint you, just as you are now. I will send him here as soon as he arrives."

"Not for worlds, sir!" she exclaimed.

At this moment, sounds were heard without, as if horsemen were entering the farm-yard.

"Ah, there is my father!" she cried.

"Plague take him! why should he arrive just now?" muttered the King.

"He has brought some friends with him—hop-merchants, from Maidstone," cried Violet. "Do, please, go, sir! He is hot-tempered, and may not like to find you here."

"What, ho!" shouted a voice, without.

"He is calling for me, as you hear, sir. Pray go: indeed, you must."

The King put on his hat, but showed no symptoms of quitting his seat.

"We have not yet settled about Sir Peter Lely, and several other important matters," he remarked, quietly.

"There he is!—he sees you!" she cried, as a stout-built personage appeared at the lattice window, looking into the yard.

"Don't be alarmed, sweetheart," said the King. "Were he as rugged as the Hyrcanian bear, I'd soon tame him."

IX.

FARMER OLDACRE.

HEAVY footsteps were heard approaching the back-door, and in another moment the burly farmer came in; booted, spurred, and having a riding-whip in his hand. His flushed features showed he was angry.

"What's this?" he cried, to his daughter. "A stranger here?"

But before any explanation could be offered him by Violet, and without a word from the King, whose countenance was turned towards him, his manner instantly changed. Taking off his hat, he bowed respectfully to his guest.

"Proud that my humble abode should be so highly honoured," he stammered out.

"Tut, tut, man; there is nothing to be proud of," cried Charles, stopping him. "Your fair daughter, as you see, has taken good care of me in your absence."

"Sorry she has played the hostess so differently," rejoined the farmer.

"She has given me all I want," rejoined Charles. "But don't mind me. Look to your friends—the Maidstone hop-merchants."

Here Violet made a slight sign to her father, which did not escape the King.

"Time enough for them—they are busy with their horses," said Oldacre. "But my character for hospitality will suffer, if you—"

"Rather than that, I'll take a cup of sack," interrupted the King. "It will do me as much good as the Tunbridge waters."

"More, I'll be bound," rejoined the farmer, with a jovial air, that pleased the King. "I have little faith in the waters; though his most gracious Majesty (whom heaven preserve!) seems to benefit by them."

"Ay; he drinks them daily," observed Charles. "His physicians recommend them."

"Were I his physician, he should drink sack," said the farmer. "Tis more wholesome of a morning than cold water. Bring a bottle of sack," he added to Violet. "And see that we are not interrupted," he added, as he passed him.

"Sit down, Master Oldacre, sit down!" said the King. "Nearer, man, nearer," he added, as the farmer seated himself at the extremity of the bench. "You have a very fair daughter, Oldacre. More fit for a palace than a cottage. How have you brought her up? How comes she with such a manner?"

"Her mother was of better condition than myself," replied the farmer. "My wife was of gentle blood."

"Ah! that explains it. I have told your daughter I must have her portrait painted by Sir Peter Lely."

"To place it beside that of Madam Nelly? No; that won't do," rejoined the farmer.

"Pshaw! I must find a way to remove your foolish objections. You are standing in your

own light, my honest friend." But here she comes."

As he spoke, Violet reappeared, with a flask of wine and drinking-cups. She filled one of the flagons for the King, and the other for her father.

"To your speedy appearance at Court, sweetheart!" cried Charles, as he emptied the cup.

"Put no such notions into her head, I pray you, sir," said Oldacre. "She is far better here."

"But does she think so herself—that is the question?" laughed the King. "Nay; let her answer."

"I confess I should like to see the Court," observed Violet.

"And you would like to be seen there, too," cried Charles. "With such beauty as yours, you might wed a noble. All the Court gallants would be at your feet."

"Why, as I live, there is one at the door even now!" cried Violet, who was standing near the window.

"A Court gallant!" exclaimed Oldacre, starting up. "Who is he?"

"Nay; how should I know, father?" she rejoined. "I have never seen him before."

"What is he like?" cried Charles. "Young and handsome—ha?"

"Yes," she replied. "But he has got his arm in a sling."

"Then it must be Talbot Harland," said Charles. "What brings him here?"

"He is tying his horse to a tree, father," cried Violet. "Shall I admit him? Have I your permission, sir?"

Charles nodded assent; and the next moment the door was opened, and Talbot came in.

Great was his surprise on beholding the King; and he would have made a befitting reverence, but a slight gesture from Charles checked him.

In the fair young damsel standing before him, Talbot fancied he discerned the motive of his Majesty's presence in the farm-house.

"What brings Mr. Talbot Harland out so early?" cried Charles.

"I am endeavouring to discover some traces of the villains who robbed Lady Muskerrey," replied Talbot; "and passing this farm-house, have stopped to make inquiries."

"I have heard of no robbery," said Oldacre. "When did it occur?"

"Last evening, in a wood near Rushall Common," said Talbot.

"Ah, I was at Maidstone at the time," re-

plied the farmer. "I have only just returned. But you amaze me by what you say, sir. Robbers were never before heard of in this neighbourhood."

"It is a most incomprehensible affair," observed the King. "A very diverting description of the occurrence was given me by the Count de Bellegarde, not two hours after it happened. The robbers were six in number, and their leader appears to be a gay young Frenchman, who styles himself Claude Duval. The rascal seems to have a great taste for dancing. Not only did he rob Lady Muskerrey of four thousand pistoles, but he danced with her niece, Miss Neville, one of the Queen's maids of honour."

"I have sworn to capture him or shoot him!" cried Talbot.

"Shoot him!" exclaimed Violet, turning pale.

"Ay, shoot him!" repeated Talbot.

"Mr. Talbot Harland has constituted himself Miss Neville's champion," said the King. "That is why he means to slay Duval for his impertinence in dancing with her."

"I am sorry I cannot help you, sir," remarked Oldacre to Talbot. "But were I you, I would give up the chase. With your injured arm, you scarcely seem in a condition to engage with a desperate robber."

"Shall I tell you how Mr. Harland came by his hurt?" said the King to Violet. "Miss Neville is the heroine of this story, as of the other. The other night, at Lady Muskerrey's ball, the Count de Bellegarde was greatly struck by her beauty, and asked her to dance. She refused him. He was naturally vexed, but was further incensed by Mr. Harland's laughter. Who gave the provocation, I know not, but an immediate meeting took place in the garden, despite the King's express prohibition. Miss Neville's unlucky champion got run through the arm, as you perceive."

There was something so arch in the King's manner of telling this story, that neither Violet nor her father could help laughing. Talbot did not venture to manifest his annoyance.

"Ah, the Count de Bellegarde is a dangerous rival," cried Charles. "He boasts that he has never been unsuccessful. Have nothing to say to him, should you ever meet him," he added to Violet. "He is fascinating, but faithless, as fifty of your sex have discovered."

"You give him a dreadful character, sir," she cried.

"Not worse than he deserves," said Talbot.

"I am sorry he has returned to plague us, but we shall soon be rid of him. He must go back with the Duchess of Orleans to St. Cloud."

Thinking he had remained long enough, Charles now arose. While taking leave of Violet, he said, in a low tone, "You may soon expect a visit from Sir Peter Lely, sweetheart."

Talbot followed him, and, unfastening his horse, took the bridle in his hand, and walked by the King's side up the steep lane.

Charles had not gone far when he looked back, and perceiving Violet at the door watching him, kissed his hand gallantly to her.

X.

A HAWKING PARTY, AND WHAT HAPPENED AT IT. THE day was spent gaily, as were all the days while the Court was at the Wells, in a variety of out-door amusements.

After the waters had been duly quaffed by the crowd of fair dames and handsome gallants who flocked to the health-giving spring to flirt and chatter, as much as for any other purpose,—after a promenade on the pantiles, or a short stroll on the heath, the company dispersed—only to meet again a few hours afterwards, either at the bowling-green on Rushall Common, where the King, and the Duke of York, and the chief members of the Court, were sure to be found; or at some other general rendezvous.

On that day, a hawking-party was made up by the King for the Duchess of Orleans, and, of course, Mademoiselle de Quéroulle was present at it. Such a party, when composed chiefly of ladies, as on the present occasion, forms one of the most charming and picturesque sights possible. And as the day was everything that could be desired for the sport, and as everybody looked well and in good spirits, there was no drawback to the enjoyment.

His fickle Majesty, we fear, must have forgotten the fair girl whom he had seen early in the morning, for he now seemed engrossed by Louise. The graceful figure of the brilliant Frenchwoman was displayed to perfection in her blue velvet riding-dress, and she managed her horse extremely well. Two falconers were in attendance upon the Duchess of Orleans, but Louise was invited to fly the first hawk. The quarry was a wild dove, and was instantly killed. Shortly afterwards, a heron, which had been roused from a pool in the hollow, afforded far better sport, and, with its long, sharp bill, transfixed its antagonist in mid-air.

But, as both birds dropped to the ground together, they had well-nigh caused an accident to Miss Neville. They fell within a short distance of her horse, and the startled animal dashed off madly across the plain.

Dorinda was in some danger, for she could not check her horse, and there were deep pits in the common, into which he might plunge headlong.

Where was Talbot Harland all this while? Speeding after her, we may be sure. But the honour of rescuing her was reserved for another—for one whom Talbot hated. The young man was outstripped by the Count de Bellegarde, who was mounted on a far swifter horse than his own, and who fortunately came up with Dorinda when she was within a few yards of one of the abysses we have mentioned. The Count seized her bridle, and, by a powerful effort, succeeded in stopping the infuriated animal.

Next moment, Talbot joined them, and had the mortification of hearing the thanks she offered her preserver.

"You have saved my life, Count," she said, with a look of unspeakable gratitude.

Dorinda soon recovered from her fright, and looked more charming than ever as she rode back to the royal party, and received the warm congratulations of the Duchess and Louise on her narrow escape.

Seeing how much Talbot was chagrined, the King said to him, "Bellegarde has had the luck this time. But I promise you your revenge."

The young man had need of consolation, for Dorinda was now all smiles to the fortunate Count.

After they had had hawking enough, the royal party proceeded to the encampment, and sat down to a sumptuous collation, which was expressly prepared for them in the Duke of York's tent.

XI.

SIR PETER LEY.

THE repast over, the Duchess of Orleans and Louise returned to Somerhill.

The King and most of the courtiers adjourned to the bowling-green, which adjoined the Duke's tent. Charles, who was in a very merry humour, challenged the Count de Bellegarde to a game, and the Count could not do otherwise than accept.

His Majesty being an admirable bowler, everybody, except the Duke of Buckingham, betted on him. The Duke backed Bellegarde.

and won a large sum. Clearly the Count was in luck that day.

Charles was still on the bowling-green, when Sir Peter Lely, who had just arrived at the Wells, made his appearance, and was most graciously received.

The renowned painter, who has given us a gallery of such beauties as were never before portrayed, and who caught, as Horace Walpole truly said, the reigning character of the period, and

“—On the animated canvas stole
The sleepy eye, that spoke the melting soul,—”

this incomparable painter was then in the zenith of his fame. Lely was not handsome, but his features were mobile, and his eyes fine and observant. In person he was somewhat portly, easy and refined in manner, and as perfect a courtier as was ever bred.

Charles regretted that Sir Peter had come too late to see Mademoiselle de Quéroutalle; but promised to present him to her at Lady Muskerrey's ball in the evening.

The King went on talking for a few minutes, when noticing that both the Count de Bellegarde and Talbot Harland were standing near him, he said to the painter, “I have another commission for you, Sir Peter.”

“Your Majesty honours me,” rejoined Lely, bowing.

“During my ramble this morning,” pursued the King, taking care that Bellegarde should hear him, “I chanced upon the sweetest creature I ever beheld—a farmer's daughter; but no wood-nymph could be more exquisite. Luckily, I discovered her retreat,” he added, glancing at Bellegarde, and perceiving that he was listening, “and enjoyed an hour's converse with her.”

“Your Majesty appears enraptured with this rustic beauty,” observed Lely, smiling.

“Enraptured! Ay, and so will you be, when you see her. But there is no rusticity about her. She is simple, but charming. You shall paint her for me, Lely.”

“It will delight me to obey your Majesty,” replied Sir Peter.

“Talbot Harland shall take you to her dwelling to-morrow,” said Charles. “He has seen her, and will tell you that I have not exaggerated her charms.”

“She is, indeed, a most lovely creature,” said Talbot, “and well worthy of Sir Peter Lely's pencil.”

“I am curious to behold her,” said the painter.

“Again, I say, don't expect a rustic beauty!” cried Charles.

“I expect an Egeria,” replied Lely. “And I doubt not I shall find one.”

“Your Majesty has been fortunate, it appears,” remarked Bellegarde, endeavouring to maintain an unperturbed demeanour.

“Tolerably so,” replied Charles, carelessly. “But let us play another game at bowls. You owe me my revenge.”

The bets were now in Bellegarde's favour. All backed him but Talbot.

But the luck had turned. The Count's hand was not so steady as heretofore. His Majesty won the game.

XII.

THE SECOND BALL AT SOMERHILL.

LADY MUSKERREY's second ball was quite as magnificent as the first, and graced by the same brilliant company.

The Queen was present, with all her ladies. The Duchess of Orleans was there, with Mademoiselle de Quéroutalle, and the King was constantly by the side of the fascinating Frenchwoman. Naturally, therefore, this was the central point of attraction to all the courtiers.

According to his promise, Charles presented Sir Peter Lely to Louise, and the flattering painter professed to be quite dazzled by her beauty, and paid her a thousand extravagant compliments, all of which were echoed by the courtiers.

Talbot Harland was almost superseded by the Count de Bellegarde. After the service he had rendered her, Dorinda could not refuse to dance with the Count, and found him so agreeable, that she danced with him a second time.

Others and bustle went on as before in the smaller room, and the Duchess of Cleveland was again among the players.

Lady Muskerrey came in with the Count de Bellegarde, whom she had secured for the contralto, and hoped her Grace was winning. The Duchess shook her head.

Lady Muskerrey whispered a word in her ear, and the Duchess replied, “I have ordered my carriage at midnight.”

“It shall be ready for you then,” said her ladyship, with a significant look.

While the ball was at its height, a troop of five well-mounted horsemen, one of whom led a sixth horse, entered Somerhill Park, covertly, and proceeded with the utmost caution towards an eminence crowned by a couple of large trees, in the vicinity of the mansion.

The night was dark and cloudy, and the

wide-spread branches completely screened them. From the hill on which the horsemen were stationed, the stately mansion could be discerned through the groves that surrounded it, with its windows brilliantly illuminated, while lively strains resounded from within.

The large quadrangular court was, of course, concealed from view, but the ruddy glow reflected on the darkling sky above it, and the shouts and other sounds continually arising from it, showed that it was filled with a host of servants, who were partaking of Lady Muskerrey's hospitality. Some few torch-bearers could be seen on the terrace in front of the mansion.

After taking up the commanding position we have described, the leader of the troop, who was no other than the redoubted Captain Clotworthy, gazed for some minutes at the illuminated mansion, and listened to the music proceeding from it. He then remarked to the trooper nearest him, who was humming the air that reached them, "You are longing to be among the dancers, Montalt."

"You are right, Captain," rejoined the other. "I should like to be at the ball prodigiously; but her ladyship has forgotten to invite us. Hark! they have changed the measure, and are playing a couranto."

And he again began to hum the tune. . .

"Not so loud," cried Clotworthy. "You will betray us."

Then turning to another trooper, he said, "Have you got all ready for Captain Duval, Mandeville?"

"Yes, Captain," replied the other. "Hat, cloak, black peruke and mask, are all here."

"And his pistols are in his holsters," added Flodard, who had charge of the led horse.

"Good!" cried Clotworthy. "Be prepared for instant action."

"The sooner the better!" cried the troopers.

"Look, Captain; there's a carriage on the terrace now!" exclaimed Montalt. . .

After a few minutes' breathless suspense, the carriage was seen moving along the road at the foot of the hill.

"It's not the Duchess, or Duval would have been with us ere this," cried Clotworthy.

"Why not attack it?" cried Montalt, unable to curb his impatience.

"Sdeath! would you spoil all? Let no man stir," cried the Captain, in an authoritative voice. "What's the hour?"

"Midnight," responded Mandeville, as a clock belonging to the mansion was heard striking.

"Another carriage on the terrace!" exclaimed Montalt.

"I see!" cried Clotworthy, waxing impatient in his turn. "We shall soon learn whether it is the Duchess's. Be on the alert."

XIII.

HOW THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND WAS ROBBED BY CLAUDE DUVAL.

WE shall now return to the ball-room.

It was crowded as ever, for supper had not yet been served, and only one guest had departed. The King had been dancing with Mademoiselle de Quérourille, and was making the tour of the room, accompanied by the Duchess of Orleans and her favourite.

Our business, however, is with the Count de Bellegarde, and we shall seek him in vain amid the dancers, or among the company around them.

After being dragged through the couranto by Lady Muskerrey, the Count proceeded to the room where play was going on; and while feigning to watch the punters at basset, kept his eye on the Duchess of Cleveland.

At last, a valet approached her Grace, who presently arose, smiled at the Count as she passed him, and went out.

Bellegarde did not offer to attend her, but followed almost immediately, and saw that she was joined by Lady Muskerrey. The two ladies then made their way through the brilliant throng towards the hall, and the Count took the same course.

On reaching the entrance-hall, which was crowded with servants, he saw that the Duchess was taking leave of her hostess, and that an usher was standing beside them. The Duchess's looks proclaimed the gratitude she was expressing to her ladyship.

This was enough for the Count. Mingling with the serving men, he passed out through a door at the rear, into the garden, without attracting observation.

Meanwhile, the Duchess proceeded to her carriage, attended by the usher. Shortly after she had entered it, a porter came forth, carrying two bags of money, which he placed, with his own hands, in the carriage beside her Grace. This done, the coachman was ordered to drive on.

No thought of danger disturbed the Duchess, who was more occupied by her renewed hopes at play than by any other reflection; and she was beginning to consider whether she would not altogether abjure cards and dice, when suddenly the carriage stopped.

This unlooked-for halt had been caused by an authoritative order from a masked horseman, who, with two others, likewise masked, and armed with pistols, barred the way.

The lamps showed these formidable figures distinctly. The coachman at once obeyed.

At the same instant, two other horsemen, similarly disguised, appeared from behind, and threatened to shoot the footmen if they attempted to stir, or give the slightest alarm.

As the Duchess, who was much terrified, looked out of the window, she perceived another horseman advancing towards her.

The light of the lamp falling upon him showed that he was masked, and enveloped in a cloak. But his feathered hat and flowing black peruke proved that he had some pretension to taste.

"I beg a thousand pardons for thus stopping your Grace," he said, with an unmistakable French accent.

"You are Monsieur Claude Duval, I presume?" cried the Duchess, whose fright was, in a great measure, removed by this address.

"Exactly," he replied. "And I hope I shall not discredit any good report your Grace may have received of me from Miladi Muskerry and her fair niece. It would enchant me to prolong the interview, which I have thus fortunately obtained, and to tell the loveliest woman in England how much the most devoted of her servants admires her. But time presses. Your Grace has a certain sum of money with you in the carriage."

"You must be a sorcerer to know that, Monsieur Duval," she cried. "Well, suppose I have?—you are too gallant to deprive me of it."

"Perhaps your Grace will make me a present of it," he rejoined. "That will be the most agreeable way of putting it. Descend!" he cried to one of the footmen. "Her Grace desires you to give the money to these gentlemen."

The Duchess did not contradict him, and the footman, not daring to disobey, got down, and opening the carriage door, delivered the bags of money to Clotworthy and Montalt, who pressed forward to take them, and then instantly drew back.

"Infinitely obliged," cried Claude Duval, bowing to the Duchess. "I am sorry I must detain your Grace a little longer."

"Detain me!" she exclaimed, uneasily.

"Only for ten minutes. You will then be at liberty to proceed, and I trust will meet with no further interruption. *Adieu, attention!*"

he cried to the coachman and footman. "I caution you not to move from this spot until you are permitted. Three of these gentlemen will remain to see my orders obeyed. I have the honour to wish your Grace a good night."

He then took off his hat, and dashed up the hill-side, followed by Clotworthy and Montalt. The others remained in guard of the carriage.

XIV.

HOW HER GRACE OF CLEVELAND WENT BACK TO THE BALL.

THE Duchess of Cleveland found her detention rather tedious, but was obliged to submit. Though vexed by the loss of the money, she could not help laughing at the adventure.

It was a relief to her when a voice called out to the coachman that he might go on; and the three robbers disappeared in the gloom.

"What are we to do, your Grace?" inquired the footman.

"Drive back to the house," she rejoined.

Nothing could equal Lady Muskerry's astonishment when she saw the Duchess of Cleveland re-enter the ball-room. But she quite understood from the expression of her Grace's countenance that something strange had happened, and flew to meet her.

"So delighted to see you back!" she hurriedly exclaimed. "But I hope no accident has occurred?"

"More than an accident," rejoined the Duchess. "I have been robbed in the park—almost within a bowshot of the house—by Claude Duval and his band."

"Amusement!" cried Lady Muskerry. "Then you have lost the money?"

"Lost it! unless the robbers are captured. I have despatched a dozen men in pursuit of them."

Before the Duchess could enter into further details, the King was seen advancing, with the Duchess of Orleans and Louise. Close behind them were Talbot and Dorinda.

"His Majesty must hear what has happened," cried the Duchess of Cleveland, rushing towards him.

"Oddfish!" exclaimed Charles, after listening to the recital. "This is a droller occurrence than the first."

And he made Louise laugh by the diverting description he gave her of it.

"It must be a frolic," he continued. "Who can have played it? Where is the Count de Bellegarde?"

"He is there, among the *entourage*," rejoined Louise.

At a sign from the King, the Count stepped forward.

"Have you been absent from the ball-room just now, Count?" demanded Charles.

Bellegarde appeared surprised at the question.

"I have just had the honour of dancing the gavotte with Lady Muskerry," he replied. "And though your Majesty was not likely to notice me, I am surprised you did not remark her ladyship."

"I recollect," said the King, smiling. "Should you recognise this Claude Duval if you beheld him?" he added to the Duchess of Cleveland.

"How is that possible, when he was masked?" she rejoined. "But he speaks with a very peculiar accent. Miss Neville will confirm what I say. She has conversed with him."

Dorinda blushed when thus appealed to, but immediately replied, "Yes, his accent is most marked and peculiar."

"At all like mine?" asked the Count de Bellegarde, with consummate self-possession.

"Not in the least!" replied both ladies.

"I am glad to hear that," cried the King. "Still, I am convinced it is a wild prank."

"The trick may be practised on your Majesty, and then you won't laugh at it," cried the Duchess of Cleveland, enraged by Louise's merriment.

"Proper measures must be taken to capture the robbers, or jesters—which you please," said the King, whose good humour was not to be disturbed.

"I will engage that your Majesty shall have some tidings of them by to-morrow," said Talbot.

"Several of the serving-men have been already sent in pursuit," cried the Duchess.

"Go, and make all possible inquiries," said the King to Talbot, who bowed, and quitted the ball-room.

"And now let us to supper, with what appetite we may," continued the Merry Monarch, as a gentleman usher advanced towards him. "If your Grace will but remain an hour longer," he added to the Duchess of Cleveland, "you will have plenty of company to escort you to Rushall Common."

"Yes, I must now insist upon your Grace staying supper," said Lady Muskerry.

"I hope you have had nothing to do with this trick, Achille," remarked Louise, aside to the Count de Bellegarde.

"I! Can you entertain such a suspicion?"

"Well, I hope Claude Duval won't rob his

Majesty," she said. "That would be carrying the jest too far."

The ball broke up about two hours later, but no further mischance befel any of the company on their return.

XV.

THE KING TAKES ANOTHER EARLY WALK.

NOTWITHSTANDING the late hour at which he retired to rest, Charles was astir as usual, and his valet, Chiffinch, ventured to observe that he thought his Majesty had better not go to bed at all.

Habited in his customary morning attire, the King sallied forth, and was soon shaping his rapid course across the heath, in the same direction as on the previous day, and with the full intention of paying another visit to the farm-house; when, on gaining the summit of the hill, he perceived a damsel, whom he felt certain could be no other than the fair object of his search. That she was looking out for him, seemed equally clear; for, on beholding him, she hastened to meet him.

How fresh and beautiful she looked on that bright morning! How sylph-like was her figure as she tripped along! And how charmingly her dark tresses sported in the breeze!

"Would Lely wait with me now," thought Charles, as he gazed at her rapturously. "He would be ravished by her appearance."

"May I flatter myself that you are looking out for me, sweetheart?" he said, as he bade her good-morrow. "I hope so; but you will guess that I was on my way to your dwelling. I bring you good news. I have seen Sir Peter Lely, and have easily prevailed on him to paint your picture. He will pay you a visit to-day."

"It must not be," she replied. "My father will not permit it."

"Your father is an obstinate churl," cried the King. "He knows not what he refuses. I will soon bring him to reason."

"You must not come to our cottage again, sir; indeed, you must not," she rejoined. "I have been on the watch since daybreak to tell you this. My father was very angry with me when you left, and will not allow me to see you again."

"How amiable of you to meet me thus?" he cried. "But I must have your picture painted, in spite of him. If Lely is not to be allowed to come to you, you must go to him. The description I have given him of you has made him all eagerness to place you in his

gallery. He is lodged with the King at Mount Sion, and, of course, has his own painting-room, where he will be at work at his easel during the greater part of the day. You will have nothing to do but ask for his Majesty's valet, Chiffinch—you will remember the name, Chiffinch—and he will conduct you at once to Sir Peter Lely's room. Conceal your fair features with a hood, if you fear attracting too much notice. I will make all preparations for you. At what hour may Sir Peter expect your visit?"

"Much as I should like to have my portrait painted by him, I cannot, dare not come," she rejoined.

"Nay, I have promised Sir Peter that you will sit to him, and I should be grieved to disappoint him," said Charles, in his most persuasive accents.

"You tempt me strongly," she cried, "but I must resist."

"I will take no refusal," urged the King. "You are throwing away a chance that falls to the lot of few. Your beauty will bloom for ever on Lely's canvas."

Her cheek coloured, and her black eyes flashed with pride. Charles saw she was yielding, and again urged her.

"I will come at noon," she murmured.

"Chiffinch shall be in waiting for you. He is discretion itself. Make no change in your costume, I entreat—you cannot improve it."

"You think not?" she remarked, archly. "That is fortunate, for I could not make a change without exciting my father's suspicion. But I must not stay here a moment longer, or I shall be missed, and then it will be impossible for me to get out. Adieu!"

And she speeded away.

Charles gazed after her as long as she continued in sight, lost in admiration of her graceful movements, and then moved off in an opposite direction.

He had just reached Bishop's Down, and was about to proceed to the cold baths, then very much frequented, when he perceived Talbot Harland, mounting the side of the heath, and called to him. The young man immediately rode towards him.

"You promised me good news this evening," cried the King. "Have you been successful? Have you captured the robbers? I fear not, from your looks."

"I cannot discover any traces of them," rejoined Talbot. "I have been all round the country, as the jaded state of my horse will prove to your Majesty, but have learnt no-

thing. This Claude Duval must have dealings with the devil, I think, to disappear in this fashion. I am now on my way to Farmer Oldacre's cottage, to see whether he can aid me in my quest."

"Don't go near him!" cried the King. "The fellow is an impracticable savage, and will not allow his fair daughter to have her portrait painted by Lely. But it shall be done in spite of him. She is coming secretly to Mount Sion at noon."

"Then I have nothing further to do in the matter," observed Talbot.

"Nothing. Chiffinch will manage it all. Go to your tent, and get an hour's repose—you need it."

Talbot thanked his Majesty, and rode towards the encampment on Rasthall Common, while the King walked on to the baths, and thoroughly refreshed himself in the clearest and coldest water imaginable, collected in a rocky basin.

XVI.

SIR PETER LE LY'S STUDIO.

SIR PETER LE LY was in the room which had been hastily prepared for him as a studio. His canvas was upon the easel, and he was employed in mixing the colours on his palette. It was not yet noon, so he proceeded very deliberately with his task, laying in plenty of black, as he knew he should require a good deal of that colour.

Suddenly, the door opened, and Chiffinch, having ushered in a damsel, whose features were concealed by a lloo mask, immediately retired. Lely quickly arose, and received his fair visitor with a courtier-like bow.

But a slight misgiving crossed him as he regarded her. He had been led by the King to expect a simple costume, but the attire of the new comer was rich, and she wore a small black hat with a crimson plume, as was then the fashion with the Queen's Maids of Honour. Besides, her tresses were blonde.

When she took off her mask, he found it was Dorinda Neville.

"You do not seem to expect me, Sir Peter," she said, noticing his embarrassment. "I understood from Mr. Talbot Harland that it is his Majesty's wish that I should sit to you, and I have come accordingly."

"Nothing could gratify me more than to paint Miss Neville," replied Lely, bowing; "but I have not yet received his Majesty's instructions to that effect. And I fancy there must be some mistake in regard to the hour."

"It will be unpardonable in Mr. Harland if he has led me into an error," cried Dorinda. "I entreat you to say nothing about it, Sir Peter, or I shall be laughed at."

"You may entirely depend upon me, Miss Neville," replied Lely. "But I trust I shall still receive his Majesty's commands."

At this moment Chiffinch opened the door, and said, "Another lady is without, Sir Peter."

"Great heavens, if I am seen, there will be no end of ridicule!" cried Dorinda.

And she fled behind the screen.

Scarcely had she disappeared, when the second lady was ushered into the room, and was received by the painter with a low bow.

She, too, wore a lloo mask, and, in one or two particulars, answered the King's description better than the first comer. Clearly, she was a brunette. Her tresses were black, and the eyes that shone through the loopholes of her mask were of the same hue.

But her attire was even richer than that of Dorinda, and of the last French mode. The *lounure* could not be that of an English-woman, and Lely felt no surprise, though he experienced some uneasiness, when she disclosed the features of Louise de Quéroutelle.

"Do not let me interrupt you, Sir Peter," said Louise, addressing him in French. "Pray, proceed with your task. I know you have a charming model—she is behind that screen—pray, let her come forth."

Lely in vain protested that no one was there.

"You cannot deceive me, Sir Peter," continued Louise, whose accents and sparkling eyes betrayed her jealous rage. "I knew you are going to paint a *jeune paysanne* for the King. She is there; I want to see her;—I will see her!"

"*Parole d'honneur, mademoiselle; there is no paysanne behind the screen,*" said Lely.

"Who is it, then? I insist on knowing," cried Louise.

"Without the lady's permission, I cannot satisfy you," rejoined the painter.

"'Tis I," cried Dorinda, stepping forth.

"Miss Neville!" exclaimed Louise, in astonishment.

"Yes. I have been brought here on a foolish errand, and am only anxious to make my escape."

Any attempt of the kind was, however, frustrated by Chiffinch, who came in, looking grave and importunate as ever, and said, "A third lady is without, Sir Peter."

"Ah! to tell!" said Louise.

"Diable! this no doubt is the right one!" muttered the painter.

Before the new-comer could be ushered in, both Lely's visitors had disappeared behind the screen.

Chiffinch immediately retired, but did not quite close the door after him.

Sir Peter bowed profoundly as before, though feeling certain it was the fair peasant. As she threw back her hood, he was electrified by her beauty; while Louise, who was stealing a glance at her from the corner of the screen, was equally amazed.

Anxious to remove the lovely girl's timidity, Sir Peter addressed a few encouraging words to her, and told her how delighted he was to have her for a model.

"I am afraid you can make nothing of me, Sir Peter," she remarked, with a smile.

"If I do you justice, his Majesty will have the best portrait I have yet painted," replied Lely, gallantly.

"Then the portrait is to be for the King?" she cried.

"Certainly. I only paint for his Majesty," said Lely, hoping he had not committed an indiscretion.

He then led her towards the easel, and begged her to assume a simple and unconstrained attitude.

"I want to take you just as you are," he said. "That will do admirably; if I can only catch that charming expression before it flits away, I shall have no further difficulty."

And, sitting down, he seized his palette and brush, and set to work with an ardour that showed how strongly he was excited.

So engrossed was he, that he entirely forgot there were other persons in the room except himself and his lovely model.

Louise remained quiet for a short time, hoping some observations would be made; but not a word being uttered, she did not like to move.

At last, she issued from her retreat, and Dorinda followed her. Violet was surprised, and not a little startled, by their sudden appearance.

"Upon my word, mademoiselle, you will make an extremely pretty picture!" cried Louise, regarding her with a very spiteful expression.

Quickly recovering herself, Violet looked at her, and said, "If I am not mistaken, you are Mademoiselle de Quéroutelle?"

"Ah, you know me!" cried Louise. "You are not so simple as you pretend."

"I have never seen you before, but I have heard of you," rejoined Violet. Then, turning to Dorinda, she added, "You, I am sure, are Miss Neville. I have likewise heard of you."

"Sir Peter must have whispered our names in your ear," remarked Dorinda, smiling.

"I was really not thinking of you," observed Lely, testily. "And you have robbed me of the most charming expression——"

"Oh! it will come again," cried Louise. "This artless creature has always a simple look at command."

Violet made no rejoinder, but her cheeks flushed with indignation, and Sir Peter called out to Louise, "Accept my thanks, mademoiselle. You have caused her to summon up the liveliest expression of scorn I ever beheld. Ah! if I could only paint you both as you are now! What a picture it would be! How it would enchant his Majesty!"

"I would not be associated with her for worlds," exclaimed Louise. "Come, Miss Neville. We will no longer interrupt Sir Peter in his pleasing task."

They were moving towards the door, when their departure was arrested by the King.

No doubt, his Majesty felt some little embarrassment at finding them in the room, but he was too much master of himself to show it.

"What means this invasion of Sir Peter's studio?" he cried.

"Mr. Talbot Harland must explain my presence here, sire," replied Dorinda.

"And mine can be explained by Bellegarde," added Louise.

"The explanations shall be given at once," cried the King. "Luckily, they are both in the antechamber. What ho! Chiffinch! Bid the Count de Bellegarde and Mr. Harland come in."

"It will be impossible for me to proceed with the portrait, if we are to have a scene," groaned Lely.

At this moment, the two persons who had been summoned were ushered in by Chiffinch. Talbot looked somewhat confused, but Bellegarde appeared wholly free from embarrassment.

On the entrance of the latter, Charles noted that Violet cast down her eyes and avoided the Count's regards.

"Harkye, gentlemen," cried the King. "Both of you must have known that Sir Peter Lely was particularly engaged at this hour, and yet each sends a lady to interrupt him. Is it a jest?"

"On my part, yes, sire," replied Talbot. "I

avow the truth, and throw myself on your good-nature for forgiveness."

"But you will not readily obtain mine, even if his Majesty forgives you," said Dorinda.

"You have made me supremely ridiculous."

"What excuse have you to offer, Count?" demanded Charles. "Your offence is the worst of the two."

"My explanation might not appear satisfactory to your Majesty, so I will not venture to offer it—especially in the presence of Mademoiselle de Quéronville," rejoined Bellegarde.

Before the King could make any reply, Violet had approached him.

"I beseech your Majesty to let me go," she said. "I cannot endure the situation in which I am placed."

Charles might have detained her, but Louise approached on the other side, and whispered, "If her portrait is painted, I shall leave with the Duchess of Orleans."

Forced by this threat to yield, the King called the Count de Bellegarde to him.

"You are the contriver of this mischief, Count," he said. "Set it right as far as you can."

"What am I to do, in heaven's name! sire?" inquired Bellegarde.

"Take me hence!" cried Violet. "That is all I ask!"

Bellegarde consulted the King by a look; and, receiving permission, offered her his hand, and conducted her out of the room.

Talbot would have paid a similar attention to Dorinda, as she followed, but she turned disdainfully from him.

"So, my day is lost!" exclaimed Lely, in despair.

"No; you shall have a scene from me," rejoined Louise. "Use the same canvas. I would have every trace of that odious paysanne obliterated. You will not see her again? Promise me that!" she added, to the King.

Of course, Charles gave the promise.

XVII.

THE DEVOUEMENT TO THE DUCHESS OF CLEVELAND'S ADVENTURE.

NEXT day the King sent Chiffinch to the farmhouse to make inquiries, bidding him use the utmost caution. The discreet valet brought back the very satisfactory intelligence that the fair damsel had been taken away by her father—whether could not be ascertained, as the house was shut to the care of a deaf and stupid old countrywoman, who had evidently been instructed to answer no questions.

'This was vexatious; but Charles persuaded himself that he should easily discover Violet's retreat. Bellegarde, he felt sure, must be acquainted with it; but the difficulty was, how to extract the information from him.

The Count's movements were watched by Chiffinch; but nothing was gained by the proceeding. Bellegarde seemed devoted to play. He left off dancing, and sat all night at the basset-table. During the day he played at hazard. Fortune favoured him; and he won large sums from Sir Charles Lyttleton, the beau Sidney, Lord Tanfe, and others.

At her royal brother's earnest entreaty, the Duchess of Orleans postponed her departure for three days. Charles was really grieved to part with her; and a presentiment crossed him, which was unhappily realized, that they should meet no more.

The Count de Bellegarde attended her Highness to Dover, but did not embark with her. Mademoiselle de Quéroutelle was left behind, having been appointed Maid of Honour to the Queen.

It may now be necessary to inquire whether Claude Duval, or any of his band, had been captured? All search for them had been fruitless. The occurrences were treated as a jest, and formed the theme of some very diverting ballads, composed by the Duke of Buckingham and Sir Charles Sedley, which caused infinite amusement to the Merry Monarch and his Court.

The Duchess of Cleveland did not relish the jests made at her expense. A most unexpected incident, however, occurred, which restored her Grace to perfect good humour.

On the eve of the departure for France of the Duchess, a farewell entertainment of extraordinary splendour was given at Somerhill. Though pressed to dance by Lady Muskerrey, the Count de Bellegarde, who was in a famous run of good luck, would not quit the basset-table.

The Duchess of Cleveland envied his success; but not being able to participate in it, got up in disgust. When she entered her carriage, what was her surprise to find three bags of money on the seat!

None of her servants could tell who had placed them there. But to one of them was fastened a ticket, intimating that the eight thousand pistoles, which the bags contained, came from Monsieur Claude Duval.

Here was a charming discovery to the adventure!

Her Grace clapped her hands with delight;

and having satisfied herself as to the contents of the bags, returned to the ball-room to proclaim what had happened.

Everybody laughed at the occurrence; but no one laughed more heartily than the Count de Bellegarde.

"Your Majesty was perfectly right," he observed to the King. "The robbery must have been a frolic. But who the deuce can have played it?"

Louise looked archly at her cousin, but made no remark.

"It is scarcely worth while to inquire now," cried the Duchess of Cleveland, laughing. "Whoever Monsieur Claude Duval may be, he is exceedingly polite."

"And dances the gallant better than any one I ever saw," cried Lady Muskerrey.

"You ought to have invited him to your ball," said Louise.

"Most likely he is here now," observed the King.

Nothing else was talked of during the remainder of the evening; and the Duke of Buckingham improvised a few more couplets to affirm that all the Court dames were dying to dance with the gallant robber, Claude Duval.

For the three following days, the Court was deprived of the agreeable society of the Count de Bellegarde, who, as we have mentioned, was called upon to attend the Duchess of Orleans to Dover.

XVIII.

KNOLE.

MEANWHILE, the King had accepted an invitation from the Earl of Dorset, father of Lord Buckhurst, to pass a few days at his residence, Knole. All the principal personages in the Court were included in the invitation. Preparations were made by the Earl and his son on a magnificent scale for the reception of their numerous guests.

It was a delicious morning in June. The sweet-toned bells of Sevenoaks Church were ringing merry peals. The inhabitants of the pleasant little town, in their holiday attire, were all out of doors, and ranged along the street to see the King and his Court pass by.

And a brave sight it was, braver than the sight of the spectators had ever witnessed, though that time-honoured individual had seen Bonnie King James ride through the village to Knole House.

"But there were no such lovely women in

SIR PETER JELLY'S STUDIO. (See page 22.)



King Jamie's days as now," he said. "It was a pleasure to gaze at them. How bewitching they looked in their velvet riding-dresses, and little plumed hats. How good-humoured his Majesty appeared. How he nodded to the men, and smiled at the ladies, and even went so far as to compliment some of them. Heaven bless his royal heart!

"Who could that be, who was riding beside his Majesty? Not the Queen. No, she was too young, and too sprightly. It must be the French beauty, of whom he had heard speak. She might be charming, but she was not half so much to his taste as the fair-haired, blue-eyed nymph who rode behind. Ah! there was a complexion—there was a winning smile!" Need we say that these encomiums were bestowed on Dorinda?

Charles and his attendants having ridden by, amid the acclamations of the beholders, a long line of richly-gilt carriages followed, each drawn by four horses. In the foremost sat the Queen, with three of her ladies; but though her Majesty was regarded with much curiosity, she was not half so vociferously cheered as her consort. Charles was extraordinarily popular with all classes of his subjects, except the Puritans, of whom there were none in the loyal town of Sevenoaks.

Porters and mounted attendants were stationed at the gates to keep out the crowd; but as soon as the royal cortege had passed through, the townsfolk were allowed to enter the park, where they conducted themselves most decorously.

Between the gates and the mansion lies a deep dell, the slopes of which are covered by splendid beech-trees; and it was while ascending this acclivity, and shaping its course through the grove, that the procession was seen to the greatest advantage. Nothing could be prettier or more picturesque than the sight of that troop of glittering gallants and fair dames.

From the moment of her entrance into the park, Louise had been in ecstasies with the scene presented to her. Never before had she beheld troops of such enormous size—not even at Fontenoy. And when at last the gray old monastic-looking pile, with its innumerable gables, its square turreted windows, and great gate-house, burst upon her, she was lost in admiration. The immense gateway in front of the gate-house charmed her as much as the same tree charmed Horace Walpole at a later period.

On the summit of the lofty embattled gate-

house floated a broad banner, embroidered with the royal arms. Smaller flags were hung out from the windows, and as the royal cortege approached, flourishes of trumpets were blown by a band of trumpeters stationed near the archway, while small pieces of ordnance were discharged from the embattled towers, making the woods resound with their roar, and startling the deer in their coverts.

Amid this joyous bruit the King alighted, and was received by the Earl of Dorset and his son, who were stationed in the outer court. But no one entered the mansion until the arrival of the Queen, and by that time the inner quadrangle was almost filled. Never had such a brilliant company been assembled within that court before—not even in the days of good Queen Bess or King Jamie. The old walls resounded with light talk and laughter.

At last, the Queen's carriage came up, and while the Earl of Dorset was bending before her Majesty, assisting her to alight, and ceremoniously conducting her into the house, Lord Buckhurst, like a true courtier, was paying assiduous attentions to Mademoiselle de Quéroualle, and telling her how much enchanted and honoured he felt by her visit to Knole.

Ere long, the courts were emptied, and the brilliant company was wandering about those long corridors and galleries that form the charm of the ancient mansion.

Almost immediately after the arrival of the royal party, a splendid collation was served in the great banquetting-hall; and after partaking of it, the King, who was in high good-humour, repaired to the bowling-green, where he remained at play with the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Buckhurst, Sedley, Etherage, and several others, during the whole of that summer afternoon.

That bowling-green, with the gay groups upon it, and the antique mansion near it, formed a lovely picture. What jests were uttered by the merry crew! *Misquette* was banished for the time. The King was merely a boon companion.

Some of the dames and gallants remained within the gardens, where plenty of belittles were to be found, but others strayed forth into the park and sat down beneath the trees. Amongst the latter were Talbot and Dorinda. The young man had recovered the use of his arm, though his wound was not quite healed. He had not yet obtained Dorinda's entire forgiveness for the unlucky jest he had practised upon her; but his penitence being sincere,

there seemed little doubt of his speedy restoration to favour. Indeed, it may be fairly assumed that she would not have strolled forth with him into the park if her displeasure had been very great.

"Am I forgiven?" he asked, as they sat down on the roots of an enormous oak.

"Not yet," she replied. "Unless you are severely punished, you may repeat the offence."

"Will no expression of regret satisfy you?"

"No; I still feel very angry. Sir Charles Sedley has made me the subject of some satirical verses. But I will not have you quarrel with him on that account. You made me ridiculous enough by your duel with Bellegarde. Do you know that I begin to like the Count, and find him very amusing. I am quite sorry he is not here now. I hope we shall soon have him back."

"I shall be obliged to fight another duel with him if you praise him so much."

"Then you will for ever forfeit my regard. Apropos of the Count, I have been longing to ask you a few questions about that lovely country damsel, whose portrait Sir Peter Lely ought to have painted."

"The only information I can give you respecting her is that she has disappeared altogether."

"You had seen her before that morning?"

"Certainly; at her father's house. His Majesty was there at the time."

"The Count de Bellegarde seemed to be acquainted with her. I noticed a look that passed between them. I cannot divest myself of the idea that she is something better than a farmer's daughter. Surely, you must have remarked the refinement of her manner? Have you ever spoken to the Count about her?"

"I feel no interest in her, and am surprised you should take so much."

"If you wish to oblige me—if you desire to regain my favour—you will find out who she is."

"There is really no mystery in the matter," rejoined Talbot. "You have endowed her with gifts she does not possess. Believe me, she is not a princess in disguise."

"She is not a peasant—of that I am certain. Ah, what do I see? Look at those two persons coming towards us."

Talbot sprang to his feet.

"One of them is Farmer Oldacre, undoubtedly," he exclaimed; "and the other must be his daughter."

"He she!" cried Dorinda, rising in her turn.

We have said that a great number of the

townspeople of Sevenoaks had been admitted to the park. They were now scattered about in groups under the trees, and some of the more curious amongst them had ventured to approach the house, in order to stare at the great folks in the gardens and on the bowling-green.

There was nothing very surprising, therefore, in the appearance of Oldacre and his daughter. They were marching along rather quickly, and it was evident that their course would bring them near the tree beneath which the youthful pair had been sitting.

But when the farmer recognised Talbot, he stopped, and seemed about to turn back. But his daughter detained him, as she saw Dorinda tripping towards her.

"I am so glad to see you again," cried the latter, as she came up. "Perhaps you have forgotten me?"

"Oh, no! I have not," replied Violet, smiling. "I could not easily forget Miss Neville."

"I have just been speaking of you to Mr. Talbot Harland," said Dorinda. "Do not suppose that I am influenced by any idle curiosity if I inquire whether you are staying in Sevenoaks?"

Oldacre plucked his daughter's sleeve, to prevent her from answering.

"You need have no concealment from me," observed Dorinda, noticing the gesture.

"I am sure not," replied the other, disregarding her father's looks. "I have been here for a few days."

"But she won't remain here many hours longer," remarked Oldacre, gruffly.

"Wherefore not?" cried Dorinda. "I have just said that she has nothing to fear from me."

"Or from me," added Talbot, who had now come up. "But if your object is concealment," he observed to Violet, "is it prudent to walk abroad thus? Others may see you, and mention the circumstance. It happens that his Majesty is on the bowling-green; but he might have been in the park."

"You hear what he says, Violet," remarked Oldacre. "I thank you for your good counsel," he added, to the young man.

"Stay; I have something more to say to you," cried Dorinda, taking Violet aside.

As soon as they were out of hearing, she continued, "If you remain here, as I think you will, I hope you will find some means of communicating with me. I will not ask you to come to the house; but here, in the park, we might meet."

"As you appear to take an interest in me, I will trust you with a secret. After what my father has just said, it will surprise you to learn that I shall be at the revel to-night."

"Pray do nothing so rash," cried Dorinda. "You are certain to be discovered."

"Have no fear for me," rejoined the other. "I have friends in the house. There is to be a character dance, and I shall figure in it. My disguise will protect me, and I know I can confide in you. Perhaps I may find an opportunity of speaking to you then. But I must now go. Adieu. My father is growing impatient. Besides, two Court ladies are coming this way. To-night!"

"To-night!" echoed Dorinda. "Rely on me."

Violet then rejoined her father, who had kept sullenly aloof from Talbot. Scarcely troubling himself to salute Dorinda, the cross-grained farmer hurried his daughter away in the direction of the park gates.

It was time he was gone; for the two Court dames alluded to by Violet, proved to be the Duchess of Cleveland and Lady Muskerrey.

XIX.

THE SPANISH DANCER.

A LOUD blowing of horns, that roused all the echoes of the ancient mansion, summoned the guests to a magnificent banquet, which was served in the great hall. Minstrels, placed in the music-gallery, enlivened the company with their strains.

With its richly-carved screen; its long tables, covered with massive plate and glittering crystal; its dais, at which sat their Majesties and the most important of the guests; with the crowd of attendants in gorgeous liveries, ministering to the wants of the dames and gallants seated at the board,—the banquetting-hall presented a splendid sight.

The male portion of the guests sat long at table, and continued their carouse till it was almost time for the evening revelry to commence.

The company re-assembled in the Brown Gallery, which, from its great length, was admirably adapted for a country-dance. Here they danced the brawl, and the cushion-dance, and a fig, and we know not how many merry dances besides; and the gallants being excited by the wine they had quaffed, footed it with unusual animation.

Somewhat fatigued by his exertions, the King sat down with Louise, when the major-

domo approached, and informed him that a Spanish dance was about to be performed.

Charles expressed his satisfaction, and a space was immediately cleared in front of his Majesty for the dancers.

The Queen was in a large room opening out of the gallery, with the Earl of Dorset and the graver portion of the courtiers in attendance upon her. Lord Buckhurst devoted himself to Mademoiselle de Quiroualle.

Presently the inspiring rattle of castanets was heard, and three dancers in Spanish costume broke through the circle formed in front of the King, and made a reverence to his Majesty. Two of them were handsome young men, of slight and graceful figure; but it was evident that their dark hue was the result of art.

All eyes, however, were fixed upon the donzella by whom they were accompanied. Her picturesque dress suited her admirably, and her short basquina displayed her finely turned limbs and small feet to perfection. Her features were concealed by an envious mask, but her throat was exquisitely moulded, and her tresses black as jet.

With what wonderful spirit she danced the bolero! How rapid were her movements! how charming her postures! With what captivating coquetry she managed her fan! Charles was enraptured.

The fandango followed; and this vivacious and characteristic dance was better calculated than the first to call forth all the remarkable graces of her figure. Irrepressible murmurs of delight burst from the admiring assemblage. Sir Peter Lely, who was standing behind the King's chair, asked his Majesty if he had ever seen her before.

"Never!" cried Charles, rapturously. "But I hope to see her often again. She is charming."

"Look at her closely, sire," said Sir Peter. "I am very much mistaken if it is not——"

Here a glance from Louise checked him. The King's curiosity was aroused.

"Who is she?" he said, to Lord Buckhurst.

"She was engaged by my major-domo; that is all I know about her, sire," was the reply.

"A ballet-dancer, no doubt," observed Louise, contemptuously.

"We'll have a glimpse of her face anon," said Charles.

"Sorry to disappoint your Majesty," replied Lord Buckhurst. "But she expressly stipulated that she should not be obliged to unmask."

"Oddfish! that's strange," exclaimed the King.

In another moment the fandango ended, and amidst the plaudits of the assemblage, the dancers advanced to make their reverences to the King.

In spite of what had been said to him, Charles was on the point of bidding the donzella unmask, when Lady Muskerrey stepped forward, and volunteered to dance the saraband with one of the Spaniards.

The absurd request could not be refused; and the donzella took advantage of her ladyship's interposition to retire.

As she passed the spot where Dorinda was standing, she inadvertently touched her white agitating her fan, and then apologized for her carelessness.

Dorinda smiled.

"I wish you would give me your fan in exchange for mine," she said.

"*De buena gana, senorita,*" replied the Spanish damsel, complying.

And with a graceful courtesy, she went on.

The King was forced to witness Lady Muskerrey's performance, which appeared doubly absurd from its contrast with the charming dances that had preceded it. However, her ladyship swallowed all the ironical compliments paid her by his Majesty.

Nothing more was seen of the fascinating Spanish dancer. She could not be prevailed upon to appear again—so the major-domo declared.

XX.

A MYSTERIOUS NOCTURNAL VISITOR.

AFTER supper, the Queen retired; but it was not until a later hour that Charles was conducted to his chamber by his noble host. Thanking the Earl for his hospitality, the King graciously dismissed him, and placed himself in the hands of Chiffinch.

The bed-chamber assigned to his Majesty had been fitted up for his grandsire, James the First. The superb state bed, with its hangings of gold and silver tissue, its fringed borders of the same material, and splendidly decorated canopy, surmounted with great plumes, cost an incredible sum. The walls were hung with priceless tapestry, representing the story of Nebuchadnezzar.

On the silver toilet-table was a magnificent Venetian mirror, with an appropriate service in silver. A velvet table, richly embroidered with gold, a few high-backed chairs, and a

large arm-chair, placed near the bed, completed the furniture of the room.

While Chiffinch was disrobing the King, he informed his Majesty that the room was said to be haunted by the ghost of the first monarch who had slept within it. Charles laughed, and said he didn't think his grandsire would trouble his repose.

A couch had been prepared for Chiffinch in the ante-chamber, and when he retired the King bade him close the door of communication between the rooms.

Charles soon fell fast asleep, but was awakened by an oppressive sensation like that caused by nightmare.

On opening his eyes, he became aware of a dark figure seated in the arm-chair, and looking towards the bed.

The figure was perfectly motionless, and its presence at first inspired the King with superstitious terror; but he soon became aware that a living being was beside him.

A light set upon a stand near the bed, and placed behind the mysterious intruder, threw his countenance into shade, and his features were further concealed by a flowing black peruke; but the King remarked that he was broad-shouldered and strongly built.

Charles was in the act of springing from his couch to summon Chiffinch, when a gesture from the unknown restrained him.

"I am armed, sire," said the audacious personage, in a low, deep voice. "Twere best your Majesty should remain quiet and listen to me."

There was something so determined in the man's manner and tone, that it enforced compliance.

"Who are you?" demanded the King. "And with what design have you come hither?"

"Your Majesty asks who I am," replied the intruder. "I will tell you without disguise. I am the leader of a secret society, numbering several hundreds, which has been formed for the express purpose of putting you to death."

"I have to deal with an assassin, then?" cried Charles.

"Be silent on your life, sire," rejoined the other. "The slightest indiscretion will be fatal to you. It must be evident, if I designed to injure you, that I possess the power. I have found means of penetrating to your chamber. I have stolen upon you during your slumber, and could have slain you, as the numerous Thane show the royal Danes."

"And what didst thou?" demanded the

King, very ill at his ease, though manifesting no fear.

"I was overpowered by the sacred majesty of your person," replied the other. "You were completely at my mercy—but I could not strike."

"I suppose I am bound to thank you for your extraordinary forbearance," said Charles, beginning to feel reassured. "But why not depart, since you had so judiciously changed your mind?"

"Had I done so your Majesty would have been unaware of the service I have rendered you," observed the unknown.

"That is quite true," rejoined the King. "I suppose you expect to be rewarded?"

"I am entitled to a reward, sire—a great reward. Not only have I saved your life, but I will deliver you from a hundred secret enemies, by whom you are beset."

"Why not denounce your accomplices?" said the King.

"Were I base enough to do so," rejoined the unknown, disdainfully, "I should ensure your destruction and my own. Any treachery would be promptly and terribly avenged. The rack would extort no confession from me. Trust to me, sire, and I will protect you. Hereafter I will ask for my reward. And now a word of caution at parting. Your safety depends upon your silence. Speak not of our interview. Make no inquiries concerning me. You will learn nothing. My precautions are too well taken. You may sleep soundly, for I promise that you shall not be again so unnecessarily disturbed."

As the words were uttered, he extinguished the light, and the chamber was instantly buried in gloom.

Charles listened intently, but could hear no sound of his departure.

After a while he summoned Chiffinch, but had to call twice before the sleepy valet-de-chambre responded.

"How's this!—the light gone out!" cried Chiffinch, as he opened the door.

He quickly relighted the taper, and Charles then perceived that the mysterious intruder had disappeared.

The King addressed no questions to the valet, nor did he explain why he had summoned him; but Chiffinch ventured to inquire if his Majesty had seen the ghost.

"I have had an unpleasant dream," replied the King. "Go to bed again, but leave the door ajar."

"He has seen his grandpapa?" muttered Chiff-

inch, as he returned to his couch; "but he doesn't like to own it."

As may naturally be expected, Charles could not easily compose himself to sleep again. But he determined, after much reflection, to maintain silence respecting the strange incident.

When he awoke next morn at his accustomed early hour, he tried to ascertain in what manner the mysterious intruder had entered the room.

Raising the tapestry, he carefully examined the wainscot, but failed to detect any sliding panel or secret door.

XXI.

HOW THE KING WAS ROBBED BY CLAUDE DUVAL.

In the course of his adventurous career, Charles had escaped too many perils not to have become a prodestinarian; and, being firmly persuaded that he was not destined to perish by the hand of an assassin, he soon shook off the fears inspired by his nocturnal visitor.

That the person was well acquainted with the mansion, or had been aided by some one possessing such knowledge, was certain. Besides the guests, there were innumerable lacqueys and servants in the house, and possibly the mysterious individual might be among them. But how was the King to recognise him, since he had not been able to obtain a full view of his features?

However, the careless monarch made no such attempt. He instituted no inquiries, and took no precautions for his safety. He went forth that morning wholly unattended, as usual, walked for two or three hours in the park, and even visited Sevenoaks.

After a copious breakfast, which he had earned by his vigorous exercise, he was too much engrossed by the amusements prepared for him by his noble host to think more of the strange occurrence.

One of the diversions of the day was a rustic *filé*, which took place in the park, among the trees, at no great distance from the mansion.

The weather being most propitious, the *filé* was delightful. A maypole, hung with garlands and ropes of flowers, was reared in the midst of a broad patch of soft green sward, and round it danced the prettiest Phillis and the gayest Corydons of Sevenoaks.

Though both their Majesties were present, no comment was placed upon the assemblage. On the contrary, the Merry Monarch promoted the festivity by announcing a general dance, and set the example to his courtiers by selecting a blooming damsel for his partner.

How the rosy-cheeked girl blushed at the honour conferred upon her, and how she boasted of it afterwards!

That dance, in which Court gallants were mingled with country maidens, and Court dames with young rustics, was a pleasant sight—pleasanter far to witness than the grand revel of the night before.

Carpets were spread upon the sward, on which those who listed could sit down; and a tent was pitched close at hand, where refreshments were served to the country folk. Besides dancing, there were various rustic sports that caused infinite amusement.

While these were going on, the Court dames and gallants exhibited their skill in archery. Turgots, and what were called "rovers," had been placed in the beautiful dell to which we have alluded, and here they shot for prizes given by Lord Buckhurst. The chief prize—a silver bugle—was won by Louise, who was enchanted by her success. She was still more pleased when Charles promised to add a chain garnished with pearls to the bugle.

As she was surveying the scene with the King, from the bank of the dell, she exclaimed, "Would Achilles were here. How much he would have enjoyed these sports!"

"I wish he were here, with all my heart!" cried Charles. "Have you heard from him?"

"Yes. The messenger who arrived this morning with a letter from the Princess to your Majesty, brought me a few lines from him. Her Highness, as you know, embarked yesterday from Dover, but rather late in the day. Achilles did not care to travel by night, so we shall not see him till to-morrow."

"I hope he will have some diverting adventure to relate on his return," said the King. Then, with a change of manner, he added, "Poor Henrietta! she writes as if she were bidding me an eternal adieu! She seems to dread returning to Saint-Cloud."

"This Duke, her husband, is a jealous tyrant, capable of any atrocious act," cried Louise. "I sometimes tremble for her Highness. I have warned her, and I hope she will not neglect my counsel."

"You seem to have frightened her," said Charles.

"Sire, you do not know the Duke of Orleans as well as I do. He is as perfidious as a Borgia, and capable of poisoning her."

The King made no remark, but a dark shade came over his countenance.

Presently, however, he recovered his gaiety,

and proceeded to the mansion, where all the guests partook of a sumptuous collation.

After the repast, Charles, who liked nothing so well as a game at bowls, and who had never found a bowling-green more to his mind than that of Knole, was about to devote the afternoon to his favourite recreation; but he was turned from his purpose by Louise, who proposed a ride in the park, declaring that she had not seen half its beauties.

The expression of her wishes was sufficient for Charles, and shortly afterwards a joyous troop sallied forth on horseback.

But the King and Louise soon separated from the others, and rode on by themselves towards the further side of the park, halting, ever and anon, to admire the lovely pictures offered to their gaze. Knolls crowned by magnificent oaks, clumps of beech, long, sweeping glades, deep dells, coverts, amidst which herds of deer might be seen tossing their branching antlers, and here and there a solitary tree of enormous size. Some of the oldest trees in the country are to be seen in Knole Park.

They were passing through a copse, when a horseman, whose approach they had not noticed, suddenly presented himself before them. There was nothing very startling in the circumstance, except that this personage was masked.

He was extremely well mounted, and gaily attired in a scarlet riding-dress, embroidered with gold. As he had pistols in his holsters, it struck both those who beheld him that he must be the much-talked-about Claude Duval.

The King, however, manifested neither surprise nor uneasiness, as the horseman removed his feathered hat, and bowed profoundly, but courteously returned the salutation.

"Tis Claude Duval, sire; I am sure of it!" cried Louise.

"You are right, mademoiselle. I am the person you suppose," said the masked horseman, addressing her in French, and speaking with a marked and peculiar accent.

"Are you aware that you are in the presence of his Majesty?" pursued Louise.

"I am quite aware of it, mademoiselle," replied Duval, with profound deference.

"Then I presume that you do not design to rob me?" cried the King, with a half laugh.

"Pardon me, sire; I have that intention," rejoined Duval. "I should be wanting to myself, if I allowed the opportunity of crowning my reputation to escape me."

The assurance with which this was uttered made the King laugh heartily.

"Oddfish!" he exclaimed; "this is a novel adventure."

"Let me give him my purse, sire," said Louise, detaching an embroidered velvet escarcelle from her girdle.

"Mademoiselle, I must have something from the King himself," observed Claude Duval. "The diamond buckle from his Majesty's hat, or a ring, will perfectly content me."

"Parbleu! you are excessively moderate in your demand," cried Charles, still laughing. "But before I give you aught, you must unmask."

"Your Majesty must be pleased to excuse me," rejoined Duval. "Out of consideration for Mademoiselle de Quérouralle, I cannot remove my mask. My aspect would horrify her. Besides, I have a vow that hinders me."

"Let him have the ring, I entreat you, sire," cried Louise. "I begin to feel afraid."

"Fear no maladresse on my part, mademoiselle," said Duval. "It is true that I have companions in this wood, but I should never dream of summoning them."

"'Twould be a pity to disappoint so polite a gentleman," observed Charles. "Give him the ring if you will," he added, presenting it to Louise.

Opening her escarcelle, she dropped the ring into it, and gave the little bag to Duval, who received it with a graceful bow.

"Grammery, sire!" he cried. "I would rather have this than a thousand pounds."

"I challenge you to wear it in my presence," said the King.

"I accept the challenge, sire," replied Duval. "You shall behold it on my finger."

"I know not if this is meant as a frolic, sir," said Charles, amazed at the other's audacity. "If so, it may cost you dear. I shall order instant pursuit; and if captured, you will assuredly be hanged."

"I must take my chance, sire!" rejoined Duval. "But I do not think I shall be captured. I have the honour to salute your Majesty."

Bowing profoundly, he galloped off.

He had not disappeared, when another horseman entered the copse from behind.

It proved to be Talbot Harland, and the King hallooted to him to come on.

"What think you has happened?" cried Charles. "Nay, you will never guess. I have been robbed."

"Robbed, give?" echoed Talbot, in astonishment.

"Robbed of a ruby ring by Claude Duval."

"Tis he who has just ridden off. Pursue him!"

"I will follow him to the death," cried Talbot.

And clapping spurs to his steed, he dashed off in the direction taken by Duval.

"If Bellegarde had not been at Dover, I should have thought that this was he," cried Charles.

XXII.

THE PURSUIT.

THE oak copse in which the incident just described took place, was situated at the outskirts of Knole Park.

As Talbot burst from the wood, he descried Duval, who was not more than a couple of hundred yards off, evidently making towards the park pales, and he shouted to him to stop, though with little expectation of his compliance.

Duval neither looked back, nor quickened his pace; but in another moment jumped the palings, and disappeared.

Talbot followed without hesitation, being luckily mounted on one of Lord Buckhurst's best hunters; but on landing on the other side of the pales, he could see nothing of the flying robber.

However, a countryman, whom he espied, called out that "t'other gentleman" had ridden down the hill, and Talbot instantly took the course pointed out.

The gentle slope which he was descending was covered with fern, with hollies and broom scattered about, but at the bottom there was a thicket, in which he felt sure the robber had taken shelter.

In this he was mistaken. Duval had merely passed through the wood, and could be discerned mounting the opposite side of the glen. Apparently, he gave himself little concern about his pursuer, for he rode slowly up the ascent, and on gaining the summit, halted, and looked round, as if considering in what direction he should next shape his course.

Tunbridge was but seven miles distant, and he may have thought of proceeding thither; but, perhaps, some difficulties occurred to him, and he rode off towards Sandridge.

Meantime, Talbot had drawn nearer to him, and kept him full in view.

After reaching a narrow lane with high banks, in which, fortunately for the fugitive, no cart or other vehicle was encountered, they came upon an extensive heath; and here Talbot did his best to overtake the robber. But

he soon found that his steed was no match, in point of swiftness, for that of Duval.

Hitherto, the robber had made no effort to escape; but he now careered across the common at a pace that would have soon carried him out of sight if he had maintained it; but he evidently enjoyed the chase, and had no wish to put an end to it.

He allowed his pursuer to come within bow-shot of him, and then started off again as swiftly as before.

Avoiding the little village of Sundridge, which lay towards the left, he rode on past River Haul, and soon reached the foot of Madam's Court Hill.

As yet, he had experienced no hindrance of any kind. The roads he had taken were unfrequented; and none of the few pedestrians he met ventured to stop him, though urged to do so by Talbot's vociferations. The sight of the pistols in Duval's holsters kept them at a respectful distance.

He now rode leisurely up Madam's Court Hill, from the summit of which a magnificent view over the wold of Kent is commanded, and was surveying the country, as if still undecided in which direction to shape his course, when three or four horsemen, apparently coming from Farnborough, were seen mounting the hill.

Not caring to meet them, he turned about, when he found that Talbot was nearer than he supposed—so near, indeed, that an encounter with him was inevitable.

Drawing his sword, Talbot spurred his horse towards the robber, shouting out to him to surrender himself a prisoner.

Duval quietly awaited the charge; and when his antagonist was within three or four yards of him, fired, and horse and rider rolled to the ground. A bullet had pierced the poor animal's brain.

"*Suivez moi, si vous pouvez, à Londres,*" cried Duval.

With these words, he dashed down the hill.

The horsemen who were mounting the ascent witnessed the encounter, and fancied that Talbot was shot; but ere they got up, the young man was on his legs.

Very little explanation was needed. The new-comers quite understood that it must be a highwayman who had fled, but they were all refused to go in pursuit of him. They thought the attempt too hazardous. The next shot might be for the rider—not for the horse.

"I call upon you in the King's name to assist

me!" cried Talbot, authoritatively. "Refuse at your peril. I belong to his Majesty's household. I must have a horse from one of you."

"Take mine," cried a stout man, dismounting. "I am a butcher of Farnborough; Gideon Ewisket by name. I'll walk on to Sevenoaks. If my horse gets shot, like this poor beast, you'll have to pay twenty pounds for him."

Without more ado, Talbot sprang into the saddle which Gideon had just quitted, and bidding the others follow, rode down the hill.

If, with the best hunter in the Knole stables, he had failed to catch Duval, it did not seem very likely he would be able to overtake him now with the sorry steed he had acquired; but he determined to do his best.

Much time had been lost, and Duval had disappeared. But, from the brow of the hill, Talbot had seen him strike off towards Otford, and he and his companions were about to take the same course, when they heard the trampling of horses in the distance, and soon afterwards perceived a little troop galloping along the road from Sevenoaks.

Overjoyed at the sight, Talbot immediately halted.

The troop consisted of half-a-dozen grooms, headed by the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Feversham, who had been sent by the King in pursuit of the robber. They had ascertained that he had taken the London road.

Talbot was now furnished with an excellent horse by one of the grooms, and dispensed with the further services of the Farnborough men.

More time had been lost; but the troop galloped on to Otford, keeping a sharp lookout on the way.

At Otford, they learnt that Duval had crossed the downs; and as they mounted the lofty chalk ridge, a shepherd told them he had seen him pass, and that he could not be more than a mile ahead.

They heard of him again at Halstead and High Elms, and hoped soon to come up with him. At Farnborough, however, they missed him, and after some consultation, a division took place in the troop; Talbot, with two of the grooms, proceeding along a lane to Spington, while the others kept on the high road to Bromley.

Talbot had the best luck. As he and his attendants were proceeding along the beautiful valley of the Cray, they discovered the fugitive about a quarter of a mile off.

Whether he had strained his horse, or was resting him, Talbot could not tell; but he was proceeding very leisurely, and though apparently aware of the approach of his foe, did not attempt to accelerate his speed till they were within a hundred yards of him.

He then started off; and while they were making every effort to come up with him, wheeled round with such suddenness, that they could not check their headlong career, but flew past him. Before they could recover themselves and turn about, he had got to a considerable distance.

While he executed this clever manœuvre, the robber was unmasked, and Talbot obtained a distinct view of his features, which were decidedly English in expression. Moreover, his derisive laughter had a peculiarly English ring about it.

Any notions about the Count de Bellegarde, which the young man might have conceived, were effectually dissipated. The mysterious robber bore no resemblance whatever to the Count.

After galloping for nearly half a mile along the banks of the Cray, Duval cleared the little stream, and crossed the broad mead on the further side.

Talbot and his attendants followed; but they soon lost sight of him, and though they continued the chase for more than an hour, they never again got on the right track.

The two nobles were equally unsuccessful. They went on to Bromley, and then turning back, encountered Talbot. The Duke of Buckingham laughed heartily on hearing of Duval's escape.

"After all, I am glad the rascal got off," he said. "Since you have seen him without his mask, and affirm that he is not Bellegarde, my interest in the chase is over. Let us get back to Knols as fast as we can, and relieve Old Bowley's mind."

"Old Bowley would be more relieved in mind if we could have restored his ring," laughed Lord Feverham.

"And what will Buckhurst say, when he learns that his favourite hunter has been shot?" cried Talbot. "I shall not dare to face him."

"Poor Old Bowley must give him another horse," said Buckingham. "I'll add a few more couplets to my song, and put him in good humour."

The banquet was over when they got back to Knols.

"You have managed badly, to let this con-

founder Claude Duval escape you," observed the King to Talbot; "and it is venacious that Buckhurst's horse should have been shot. But I am glad you have seen the robber without his mask."

"Do tell me what he is like?" cried Louise.

"That would be difficult," cried Talbot. "But he is not like the Count de Bellegarde."

XXIII.

THE COUNT DE BELLEGARDE RESTORES THE RING TO HIS MAJESTY.

NEXT morning, the Count de Bellegarde arrived from Dover, and immediately presented himself to the King, who was on the bowling-green, surrounded by his courtiers.

The Count did not seem at all fatigued by his journey; and, indeed, looked much better than the courtiers who had been spending the night in dancing and revelry. He gave his Majesty full particulars of the embarkation of the Duchess of Orleans, and delivered a message with which she had charged him.

"Have you no message for me?" asked Louise, who, hearing of the Count's arrival, had followed him to the bowling-green.

"Her Highness has sent you a little token, which I will deliver presently," replied Bellegarde. "But I have something more to relate to his Majesty."

"An adventure, I hope," observed Charles.

"Yes, sire; a very singular adventure. I have been stopped on the highway by a robber—by no other, in short, than Claude Duval."

At this announcement, the King expressed great surprise, and all the courtiers gathered round, to listen to the narration.

"I had dined at Canterbury, sire," commenced Bellegarde, with his customary vivacity,— "dined very well, I may remark, at the 'Fleur-de-Lys'—and was riding slowly across a wide common, about midway between the ancient city and Maidstone, when I perceived a dwarf-like man coming towards me. He was dressed in a scarlet riding-coat, and I might not have suspected him of any ill design, had I not observed that he was masked. I had sent on my servant to Maidstone, where I meant to sleep, so that I was unattended. However, this did not discompose me. I fancy myself a match for any robber."

"During this interruption, Count," said the Duke of Buckingham, who was among the auditors, "but about what time did this singular encounter take place?"

"About half-past eight, I imagine," replied

Bellegarde. "It was just beginning to get dusk. Having found an excellent bottle of Bordeaux at the 'Fleur-de-Lys,' I had stopped to finish it, and was, therefore, in excellent cue for an adventure.

"My friend in the scarlet coat did not leave me long in doubt respecting his intentions. As he came up, pistol in hand, he shouted out, '*La bourse, ou la vie!*' 'Aha, my friend!' I exclaimed; 'I thought I could not be mistaken! You are Monsieur Claude Duval.' 'At your service, Monsieur le Comte,' he replied, with perfect politeness. 'I have had a rare piece of luck to-day. I have had the honour of robbing his Majesty.' '*Sarpedieu!* that will not pass with me, friend,' I cried, sceptically. 'I have heard of your exploits with certain Court dames, but you will permit me to doubt this assertion.' 'If I show you the ring that I took from his Majesty, it will perhaps convince you,' he rejoined. 'Let me see it,' I said.

"On this, he exhibited a ring, which I immediately recognised. My mind was made up in an instant. I am tolerably quick; and while he was thus occupied, I wrested the pistol from him, and held it to his head. 'You shall be robbed in your turn, coquin,' I cried. 'Give me the ring, or I will blow out your brains.' And he surrendered it with the best grace he could. 'You have another pistol in your holster,' I said. 'I must have it.' He seemed inclined to resist, but at last yielded up the weapon.

"Now, begone, rascal,' I cried; 'and thank your stars that you are allowed to escape with life.' 'A word before I go, Monsieur le Comte,' he cried. 'Is it your intention to restore the ring to his Majesty?' '*Parbleu!* such is my design, rascal,' I exclaimed, affronted by the question. 'Then be pleased to make his Majesty understand my inability to wear it in his presence, as I had engaged to do.' And he ran off, leaving me to pursue my journey."

The King and all the listeners laughed heartily at the recital.

"But where is the ring, Count?" inquired Charles.

Bellegarde took off his glove; and drawing the ring from his finger, presented it, with a low bow, to the King.

"Oddfish! an excellent conclusion to the story," cried Charles. "You have done better than those who went in pursuit of the robber."

"Far better!" cried Talbot. "The glory is the Count's—the trouble has been ours."

"And the loss mine," observed Lord Buckhurst, thinking of his hunter.

"Well, this Duval is an amusing rascal," cried the King. "But I hope we shall hear no more of him. And now for a game at bowls."

XXIV.

LOUISE GIVES THE COUNT ADVICE.

THE festivities at Knole were continued for two days longer; and, during this interval, Talbot's jealousy was excited by the attentions paid by Bellegarde to Dorinda.

As we have already remarked, the Count had a fascination of manner that few women could resist, and Dorinda began now to experience its influence. He made himself so exceedingly agreeable, told her so many droll stories, and amused her in so many ways, that the minutes seemed tedious without him. He was ever in attendance upon her, when she rode out in the park; took part in any pastime in which she engaged, and danced with her at the evening revels.

Whether he was really as much smitten as he appeared, we will not pretend to say; but Talbot began to look upon him as a very dangerous rival, and determined to pick another quarrel with him on the slightest pretext, and on the earliest possible occasion that presented itself.

Meantime, the foolish young fellow had become sullen in his deportment towards Dorinda, and, by such absurd conduct, naturally incurred her displeasure.

To punish him for his folly, she would not dance with him; and when he saw Bellegarde carry her off in triumph to the cushion-dance, which was danced every night in the Brown Gallery, he was ready to explode with jealous rage.

As may readily be supposed, his anger did not cause the Count to discontinue his attentions to the fair one. However, Louise thought proper to give her cousin some advice.

"I must take you to task, Achille," she said. "You are persuading this charming girl that you are very much in love with her, while I know you are only amusing yourself at her expense. And you are tormenting that poor Talbot out of his life, because he is foolish enough to show that he is jealous. Now he is really attached to the girl, and is far more deserving of her than you are, even if your intentions were serious, which I am sure they are not, and I therefore insist upon your ceasing to interfere with him. If you were to cause a

capture between them, I should never forgive you. There are many Court dames to whom your attentions would be agreeable, and whose husbands would not quarrel with you; and I would recommend you to confine yourself to them."

"This lecture comes very well from you, fair cousin," replied Bellegarde, laughing; "and I should endeavour to profit by it, if I thought it in the least called for. But you seem to be far better acquainted with my sentiments than I am myself. Till this moment, I imagined I was really enamoured of Dorinda Neville; and though my merits may be inferior to those of Talbot Harland, yet if she prefers me to him, I shall be content. I do not feel bound to make any sacrifice to a rival."

"I hope you will reflect upon what I have said, Achille," observed Louise, gravely. "You are wholly unfitted for marriage, and I could not wish Dorinda a greater misfortune than to be united to you!"

"I am obliged by your good opinion of me, fair cousin," rejoined Bellegarde; "and I have no doubt you have formed a correct estimate of my qualifications for matrimony. Before taking such a decided step, I shall make a point of consulting you."

"Can you be serious for a moment, Achille?"

"I am perfectly serious, now."

"Then, be advised by me, and desist from this pursuit, or you will infallibly incur the King's displeasure."

"I never was in greater favour with his Majesty than at the present moment," said Bellegarde.

"You are deceived," rejoined Louise, "Any further indiscretion on your part will be visited by banishment from Court. You have gone too far with your jests; and though the King is the easiest person living, there are limits even to his good nature."

"I will not affect to misunderstand your meaning, fair cousin, because I am aware you have got some absurd notions respecting me into your head; but since I have really done nothing to offend his Majesty, I am not in the least uneasy."

"You calculate on my protection in case of need, do you not?"

"Most certainly."

"Then do something to deserve it."

"You have only to command me, fair cousin. What am I to do?"

"Help me to get rid of an odious creature who

troubles me. You recollect that *fausse paysanne* whose portrait was to have been painted by Lely? I suspect she is an actress. She has been here at Knole during your absence. She danced one night at the revel, in a Spanish costume; and though she was masked, I recognised her, and so did Sir Peter. I have some reason to believe she is here still."

"Here! in the house? I do not think that likely," rejoined Bellegarde.

"Here, or in the neighbourhood. She has been seen."

"By whom?" asked the Count, quickly.

"No matter by whom. You must have her removed."

"But I must first discover her," replied Bellegarde, laughing.

"That will not be a very difficult task to you," said Louise; "and I beg you will set about it without delay."

"Well, I will do my best," he replied.

"Do not play me false in the matter, Achille, or—but I won't threaten. This girl must not cross my path."

"She shall not, if I can prevent it," said Bellegarde.

"And I know you have the power," she rejoined.

The foregoing conversation took place in the garden, and at its close they separated.

XXV.

BELLEGARDE AND TALBOT HARLAND ARE BANISHED FROM COURT.

IN spite of the counsel given him by Louise, the Count continued his attentions to Dorinda.

There was hawking that morning in the park, and most of the Court dames rode out to witness the sport. Amongst them was Dorinda. Bellegarde was constantly by her side; but Talbot never once came near her.

If the fickle dandel secretly pitied her wretched lover, her looks did not betray the state of her feelings, for she seemed in high spirits, and laughed immoderately at the Count's lively sallies.

On their return to the mansion, Bellegarde assisted her to alight, and was lingering within the inner quadrangle, when Talbot approached, and with forced politeness begged the favour of his company for a moment on the terrace.

"Willingly," replied Bellegarde, attending him. "I am afraid you did not enjoy the sport, yet it was excellent. Miss Neville was delighted."

"Enough, sir," interrupted Talbot, sternly.

"I did not bring you here to talk about hawking, but to tell you that your attentions to the young lady, whose name you have just mentioned, are disagreeable to me, and that I cannot permit them."

"On my faith, this is excessively amusing!" cried Bellegarde, laughing derisively. "I should really be very happy to oblige you, but as my attentions, though disagreeable to you, appear to be agreeable to the young lady, I propose to continue them, even at the hazard of giving you offence. I presume you have nothing further to say to me?"

"Yes, there must be another meeting between us."

"I should have thought that the first might have satisfied you," rejoined Bellegarde. "Wait till your arm is quite cured, and then we will talk about a second meeting."

"My arm is strong enough to chastise you, as you will find," cried Talbot, exasperated by the sneer. "I will force you to meet me, and that without delay. I gave you credit for more courage than you seem to possess."

"You have no right to call my courage in question, sir," said Bellegarde, with provoking calmness. "And I might fairly refuse your challenge. But since you are in the mood for fighting, I will not baulk you. We will settle the affair to-morrow morning, as early as you please, in a retired part of the park."

"Bo it so," cried Talbot. "I will come forth at six o'clock, with Lord Feversham. If you will take the trouble to follow, I will lead you to a convenient spot."

"I will not fail; and will bring the Duke of Buckingham with me," rejoined Bellegarde.

They formally saluted each other, and separated.

Bellegarde proceeded to the bowling-green, where he found Buckingham, and told him what had happened.

"I am not surprised," said the Duke, laughing; "for I remarked that Talbot was highly offended by your attentions to the charmer. I hope you don't mean to kill him."

"Kill him—no! But since he is resolved to make himself troublesome, I must keep him quiet."

"Well, you may count upon me," said the Duke. "But six o'clock is an early hour; I shall be roused out of my first sleep."

"Better not go to bed till we come back," observed the Count. "We will sit up at piquette, if your Grace thinks proper."

Whether Bellegarde's proposition was actually carried into effect we know not, but as

the turret clock struck six next morn, he and the Duke issued forth from the gate-house.

Talbot and Lord Feversham were standing beneath the great yew-tree, and, on seeing them, bowed, and set off across the park. Bellegarde and Buckingham followed more slowly in the same direction.

Their proceedings were noticed by another person, who was out before them, and taking exercise in the park. Suspecting their object, this individual watched whither they were going.

It was a most lovely morning, and all nature seemed rejoicing in the sunshine. The rooks were clamouring amid the topmost branches of the trees; the smaller choristers were carolling blithely in the groves; the deer tripped across the wide lawns; and there was a freshness in the air that produced a most exhilarating effect on the spirits.

Even Buckingham, though rarely alive to the beauties of nature, was charmed by the lovely scene, and paused for a moment to gaze around.

"After all, there is some enjoyment in early rising, as Old Rowley has discovered," he exclaimed. "Methinks, I shall adopt his plan in future."

"Adopt mine, and sit up all night," said Bellegarde. "It comes to the same thing."

"You are the most extraordinary person I ever met with, Count!" cried Buckingham. "You never seem wearied, and your spirits never flag."

"Not often," rejoined Bellegarde. "But I have my moments of depression, like the rest. My gaiety is constitutional, and seldom deserts me. Things generally present themselves to me under an amusing aspect. As to bodily fatigue, I never feel it. But we must not loiter here. They are waiting for us."

They then pressed on towards a giant tree, beside which Talbot and the Earl had taken their stand.

Between this patriarch of the grove and the adjacent wood a clear space of green sward was left. No better spot could have been selected for the purpose.

Courteous salutations were exchanged between the principals in the affair.

They then took their places, drew their swords, and saluted each other for the second time.

The assault had just commenced—furiously on the part of Talbot, cautiously on that of the Count—when a loud, authoritative voice commanded them to hold.

But as, in spite of the order, they continued to exchange passes, Buckingham rushed between them with his drawn rapier, exclaiming, "Are you mad? It is the King!"

On this, they immediately sheathed their swords, and bowed deferentially to Charles, who was standing beside the old tree, looking very angry.

"Soh, gentlemen," he cried, furiously, "you dare to continue the combat when I command you to stop! I will teach you the respect you owe me."

"Down on your knees," whispered Buckingham to the combatants. "You have greatly offended him."

Acting on the hint, they flung themselves at the King's feet.

Charles, however, was not to be appeased.

Regarding them sternly, he said, "I am determined to put a stop to these perpetual duels about trifles among those belonging to the Court. Every day some foolish quarrel is settled with the sword. An example must be made. You are both banished from my presence."

"Banished!" cried Talbot, starting to his feet. "I had as lief your Majesty doomed me to death, as banish me from Court."

"You are thinking of Dorinda Neville," observed Charles.

"The punishment is too severe for so light an offence, sire," said Bellegarde.

"The offence is not light," rejoined the King. "The sentence is pronounced. I am inflexible."

And he strode away.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THE COURT AT WHITEHALL.

I.

TYBURN

A profoundly dark night, some months after the events previously narrated, a little troop of well-mounted horsemen, headed by a powerfully-built individual, who was no other than the redoubted Colonel Blood, rode across Hyde Park, and shaping their course towards the bare, howl field, which then, and for more than a century afterwards, was set apart as the place of public execution, drew up beside the Tyburn Tree.

This fatal tree, which, with grim jocularity, was said to bear fruit all the year round, was a huge triangular frame of wood, having strong cross-beams, supported by tall posts.

To those beams the carcasses of Cromwell, Bradshaw, and Ireton had been attached. Nine years before, on the anniversary of the execution of Charles I, the bodies of the chief regicides were exhumed, dragged on common hurdles to Tyburn, and, with every mark of indignity, hung to three corners of the gallows.

The night, as we have said, was pitch dark, and the ill-omened tree could scarcely be distinguished by the horsemen gathered around it.

Nevertheless, one of them, at the command of Blood, leapt from his steed, and with great agility climbed the gallows, and seated himself astride a cross-beam. He then called out that he was ready; whereupon Blood handed him a halter, which he fastened to the beam, testing its security by his own weight as he descended.

For some time, thunder had been growling in the distance; and at this moment a flash of lightning illuminated the strange scene, giving those assembled round the gallows a weird and fantastic appearance.

"A storm is at hand," cried Blood. "But I hope it will not burst before our work is done."

The hour of vengeance is at hand. Before midnight, my long-deferred project will be executed.

"Look down upon me, murdered brethren, and approve my act! When you were iniquitously put to death by the relentless Ormond I vowed that he should perish in like manner. Now I am about to keep my oath. To this tree, which from its dismal branches has borne the corpses of three Englishmen nobler by far than himself, I will hang the proud Duke—hang him till he is dead, and then your cries for vengeance shall cease.

"This night," he continued, "the proud Duke shall be sought for far and wide—sought for vainly; for none will seek him here, at Tyburn. But at dawn, to-morrow, those who pass by shall behold him hanging from this tree; with a scroll upon his breast, proclaiming that his death has been an act of retributive justice."

Again the lightning flashed, and showed that the speaker's hand was extended towards heaven, while his features were agitated by half-frenzied enthusiasm.

But he soon became calm, and addressed his companions in his usual deep, earnest tones.

"The deed we have sworn to accomplish is one of the most daring ever planned, and might well appal the stoutest heart; but the very boldness of the project will ensure its success, provided it be executed with vigour and despatch."

"Have no fear of us, Colonel," said Montalt,—it was he who had tied the halter to the gallows. "We have stood by you on many an occasion, and we shall not flinch now."

"You are all brave fellows, and as true as steel; that I know full well," said Blood. "But this is an enterprise of a different character from any you have yet undertaken, and demands activity as well as courage. We must pounce upon our prey like eagles."

THE ATTACK ON THE DUKE OF ORFOND. (See page 42.)



"We all know what we have got to do, Colonel," observed Mandeville. "But it may be well to repeat your orders."

"You are aware that the Duke of Ormond, whose destination I have sworn, is feasting this day in the City. After the banquet, which is the last he will partake of, it is certain that his Grace will drive back to Clarendon House, in Piccadilly; but it is equally certain he will never arrive there, for before he reaches his princely mansion, we will force him from his gilded coach, in which he may be dreaming of fresh triumphs, and bear him hither to his fate. I myself will be his executioner; and he shall find that I can play the part as skilfully as his Dublin hangman."

And he laughed fiercely at the thought.

"You have told us how we are to capture the Duke, Colonel; but not how we are to bring him hither!" said Floodard.

"He shall ride behind me," rejoined Blood; "bound to me by this broad belt. My horse is strong enough to carry double."

"And now, let us about it. A deed shall be done this night that shall fill all London with consternation on the morrow, and make the King himself tremble in his palace!"

A roll of thunder formed a fitting accompaniment to their departure on their fearful errand.

II.

THE ATTACK ON THE DUKE OF ORMOND.

They galloped down Park Lane, which then answered to its name; but slackened their pace as they approached Piccadilly. Few were in the street at that hour; and the night suited their fell purpose.

When close to Clarendon House, which occupied a splendid position, almost facing the upper end of St. James's Street, Blood posted his men at various points, and stationed himself at the corner of the street, ready to give the signal of the Duke of Ormond's approach.

Clarendon House, which, at the period of our story, was in possession of the Duke of Ormond, was built by the great Lord Chancellor Clarendon in his palmy days of power, and was accounted one of the most magnificent structures in London.

The dear old gossip, Peggys, who surveyed it when near its completion, described it as "the finest pile I ever did see in my life, and will be a glorious home." A glorious home it was, though Evelyn says "it had many defects as to the architecture;" but he adds "it was planned most gracefully."

The situation, indeed, was splendid, and the proud, palatial pile overlooked all the meaner edifices around it. Its internal arrangements and decorations corresponded with the magnificent exterior. No palace could be more sumptuous. It had vast suites of apartments, richly furnished, and boasted a picture-gallery filled with portraits. Extensive gardens surrounded it. But the splendour of his mansion contributed to Clarendon's downfall. Its enormous cost was so far beyond his resources, that it was said he must have taken bribes from France to enable him to erect it. Another circumstance, regarded with general displeasure, was that the mansion was built with the ruins of St. Paul's Cathedral, after the destruction of the ancient fabric by the great fire of London. Clarendon did not long enjoy his splendid residence. His swelling pride was reduced.

After his disgrace and exile, it was purchased by Monk, Duke of Albemarle, and on the death of the latter, by the Duke of Ormond, of whom we must now say a few words.

No one had been a more faithful adherent of Charles—no one had made greater sacrifices for his Sovereign, than James Butler, Duke of Ormond. Refusing all Cromwell's conditions, he followed the fugitive Prince to France, and remained with him till the Restoration. He was appointed Grand Steward of the Household, and First Lord of the Bedchamber. As Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, he discharged the important office with seal and ability; but his incorruptible honesty made him many enemies, chief among whom was Buckingham; and they eventually succeeded in procuring his recall.

It was during Ormond's government in Ireland that the events occurred that led to Blood's atrocious design against the Duke's life. A formidable plot had been hatched in Dublin by a few hundreds of desperate individuals, at whose head was Blood, to surprise the Castle, plunder the magazines of arms, put the Lord-Lieutenant to death, assume the government of the country, and proclaim war against England.

The plot was discovered in time to prevent an outbreak. The ringleaders, with the exception of Blood, were taken and hanged. Vindictive and resolute, Blood solemnly vowed to avenge his friends upon Ormond, and we have seen that he meant to keep his oath.

Born in 1610, the Duke of Ormond was now just sixty; but he bore his years extremely well. He was graceful in appearance, and dignified in manner. His morals were irre-

proachable; and this drew upon him the sneers of the profligate courtiers. The Duke kept a noble table, and maintained a princely establishment at Clarendon House.

On the night in question, Ormond was returning from the City, where he had assisted at a splendid banquet given to the young Prince of Orange by the Goldsmiths' Company. Little did he dream of the ambuscade that was laid for him. Pleasant thoughts occupied his mind.

He had driven slowly along Pall Mall, and still more slowly up St. James's Street. Two footmen, in gorgeous liveries, walked beside the carriage. Before he had reached the top of the street he had fallen into a doze; but he was rudely awakened by strange and alarming sounds.

Just as the carriage turned the corner of Piccadilly, it was beset by several men on horseback, who appeared, to the terrified attendants, to rush upon them from all quarters.

The leader of the attack ordered the coachman to stop; but as the unfortunate man, though much frightened, tried to whip on his horses, he was instantly shot through the head, and dropped from the box. The panic-stricken footmen offered no resistance.

By this time, Blood had sprung from his horse, and forcing open the door of the carriage, ordered the Duke, in a peremptory voice, to alight.

Ormond, however, refused, and endeavoured to defend himself; but Blood seized him by the throat, and dragged him forth.

"Would you assassinate me, villain?" cried the Duke, who was half-strangled.

"Your Grace's sole chance of safety lies in keeping quiet," said Blood. "Attempt to give the alarm, and I will shoot you, as I have just shot your coachman."

Undeterred, however, by the menace, Ormond struggled to get free, and shouted out lustily for help, but none came. Nor did the footmen even attempt to assist him.

But moments were precious to Blood. As he had explained to his accomplices, the success of the daring exploit depended on despatch.

Committing the Duke to Montalt and Flood, who tied a handkerchief over his mouth to stifle his cries, the active ruffian again mounted his steed.

Despite his struggles, Ormond was then placed by main force behind his captor, and fastened to him by the belt.

In another moment, Blood was dashing off

exultingly with his prey, while his companions followed as quickly as they could.

"Make for the place of rendezvous by different routes," he shouted to them.

While Blood, with the captive Duke, en croupe, was galloping along towards the corner of Hyde Park, shouts were heard in the rear, and he looked back to ascertain if pursuit had commenced; but, owing to the gloom, he could perceive nothing.

The movement he had made, however, enabled the Duke, whose hands were free, to pluck the handkerchief from his mouth, and being now able to speak, he asked his captor whither he was taking him.

"Your Grace will learn soon enough," rejoined Blood, gruffly. "But since you desire to know, I will tell you. I am taking you to Tyburn."

At these sinister words, a shiver ran through the Duke's frame.

Blood perceived it, and, with savage satisfaction hastened to add, "I am taking you to Tyburn, to hang you on the common gallows, as you hanged my brethren at Dublin."

"Ha! you were one of the traitors!" cried Ormond.

Blood took no notice of the remark, but said presently,—

"If you have any preparations to make, make them quickly. We have not far to go."

By this time, the other horsemen had disappeared, and finding they were alone, the Duke essayed to move his captor.

"Set me free, and I will make you wealthy," he said; "I swear it."

"If you would give me Clarendon House and all within it, I would not spare your life," rejoined Blood in an inexorable tone.

Thereupon the Duke remained silent.

While he was considering what he could do to effect his escape, the shouts behind them grew louder, and awakened hopes of deliverance in his breast.

"Hark!" he exclaimed; "help is at hand. I shall be rescued. You had better accept my offer. I will not break my word."

"Nor I mine," rejoined Blood sternly. "I have sworn to hang you."

So saying, he urged on his horse.

But he did not go far. The Duke put in practice the plan that he had conceived. Having got his right foot under the heel of his captor, he suddenly raised himself's leg, and exerting all his force, hurled him out of the saddle.

They both fell heavily to the ground.

Ormond was so shaken by the fall, that he could not move; but Blood, though by far the heavier man, was less hurt, and unfastening the belt, quickly scrambled to his feet.

Through the gloom, he could discern several persons hurrying to the spot, and scarce a moment was allowed to provide for his safety.

His well-trained horse had stopped a few yards off, and running towards him, he contrived to gain the saddle once more.

He then discharged a pistol—but luckily without effect—at the prostrate Duke, and, with a deep imprecation, rode off and eluded pursuit.

None of his accomplices were captured.

III.

THE EARL OF OSSORY.

THE daring outrage we have described filled the whole community with alarm and indignation.

The mysterious circumstances attending the attempt intensified the excitement occasioned by it. The halter was found attached to the gallows at Tyburn, proving beyond all doubt the real object of the Duke's assailants.

A proclamation was immediately issued, offering a reward of a thousand pounds for the discovery of the assassins; but it did not lead to their capture. It was thought they must be screened by some important personage; otherwise they must have fallen into the hands of justice. Suspicion fell on Buckingham, who was known to be Ormond's chief enemy.

The Duke of Ormond had received no serious injury, but he was confined to his room for a few days, and being unable to present himself at Whitehall, sent his eldest son, the Earl of Ossory—a gallant, but hot-tempered young noble—to thank his Majesty for his inquiries after him.

Ossory was admitted to the King's private cabinet, and having delivered his father's message, declared his conviction that Buckingham was the author of the attack. Charles endeavoured, but in vain, to convince him that his suspicions were groundless.

Unluckily, before the fiery young Earl had departed, Buckingham himself appeared. He could not help noticing Ossory's fierce looks, but with as much nonchalance as he could assume, he said to him, "How is the good Duke your father, my lord?"

"It will be small satisfaction, I apprehend, to your Grace, to learn that he has well-nigh recovered from the murderous attack made

upon him by your bravos," rejoined Ossory, sternly.

"My bravos?" exclaimed the Duke.

"Your hired assassins, if you prefer the term," cried Ossory. "What I say to you, I have just said to his Majesty. I believe you to be the author of this detestable attack on my father's life. I believe you, also, to be capable of making another attempt, since the first has failed; and I therefore warn you that if any harm shall henceforth befall him—if, by open violence, or secret, subtle means, by poison or by steel, my father shall be done to death—I will hold you responsible. I will treat you as the assassin. I will take the law into my own hands. I will shoot you, even if you should take refuge behind his Majesty's chair."

And he clutched the handle of his sword, as he uttered the menacing words.

"Must I endure the ravings of this madman, sire?" demanded Buckingham.

"My lord," said the King, gravely, to Ossory, "I can make every allowance for your excited feelings, but language such as this must not be held in my presence. You have no proof whatever of the charges you prefer against his Grace of Buckingham."

"Proof will be forthcoming, sire," replied the young man.

"Till then, be silent," said the King, with dignity.

"My accusations are made to his Grace's face, not behind his back!" cried Ossory.

"I wish to heaven the villains had hanged your father!" said Buckingham, losing all control of himself. "It would have been a good riddance—you may tell him so."

"I will not fail to convey to him your Grace's approval of the infamous deed. He will know what to think of it," rejoined Ossory. "Meantime, I retract nothing, and repeat my warning."

And, with a profound reverence to the King, and a scornful and defiant look at Buckingham, he withdrew.

"I will wash out these insults in his blood!" cried the Duke.

"I forbid you to follow him!" said Charles, authoritatively. "I will send you to the Tower, rather than you shall fight him. A duel with Ossory would not clear you from suspicion. Were he to fall by your hand, people would say you had positively murdered him."

"Does your Majesty really believe I have had any hand in this untoward affair?" said

the Duke, suppressing his rage by a great effort.

"I don't know what to think," rejoined Charles. "Rightly or wrongly, you have got all the opprobrium of the deed. They say you shelter the assassins, and keep them out of the way, lest they should betray you. Have you any idea who was the leader of the attack?"

"How should I, sire?"

"I am sure I have seen him," said Charles.

And he proceeded to relate to the Duke the mysterious incident that had occurred at Knole.

"I believe my nocturnal visitor to be the man," he added, in conclusion.

"Your Majesty is right," cried Buckingham.

"Tis he, beyond a doubt. He has not paid you a second visit, I presume?"

"No; but I feel certain I shall see him again ere long. He has been here."

"At night, sire?"

"No; in broad daylight. One morning, about three weeks ago, I heard his voice in the ante-chamber. He was conversing with you."

"With me, sire?" exclaimed the Duke, in some confusion.

"The door happened to be partly open; you were speaking to some one within; and the voice of your interlocutor was that of my mysterious visitant. I knew it at once."

"You say this occurred about three weeks ago, sire. I am surprised you did not mention the circumstance to me at the time."

"I should have mentioned it, had you come in. But you left with the person in question."

"This is strange!" cried the Duke. "Who could it be?"

"He had a deep voice," observed the King.

"That does not help me, sire; deep voices are not uncommon. Did you hear aught that was said?"

"I only remarked that you spoke impatiently to him."

"That's not singular. I am always impatient when troubled, and I am constantly troubled in the ante-chamber. But your Majesty says I left with him?"

"I thought so," replied the King. "Come, come! you know more about this mysterious individual than you care to confess. If a secret society really exists—as would appear from what has just happened to Ormond—and if this man is the leader, we ought to be able to lay hands upon him. I myself am not safe."

He can as easily penetrate to my chamber at Whitehall, as to that at Knole."

"I will answer for your Majesty's safety," replied the Duke. "This man shall be found; but I cannot deliver him up to justice. If we crush him, we shall bring the whole harnet's nest upon us. Better make terms with him; he may prove useful."

"You have found him so," observed the King, drily.

"And so may your Majesty," rejoined Buckingham. "But let us change the theme. I have just seen the Duchess of Cleveland. Her Grace is furious at the honours your Majesty has just conferred on Mademoiselle de Quérionalle. At first she refused to believe me, but I told her it was perfectly true, and that her rival had been created by letters patent Baroness of Petersfield, Countess of Farnham, and Duchess of Portsmouth."

"You might have added, that equal honours have been conferred upon her by Louis XIV, who has just created her Duchess of Aubigné," observed Charles, laughing.

"I did not neglect to mention that fact, sire; and I was malicious enough to add that the Duchess of Portsmouth's pension will exceed her own. When I told her this, I thought she would have gone mad with rage. There was nothing spiteful that she did not say of your Majesty. She vowed she would never see you again, but would leave Whitehall for ever."

"Would to heaven she would keep her word!" exclaimed the King.

"I applauded her resolution," said the Duke. "But she then changed her note, and declared she would stay to plague you and her rival."

"I thought she would not be got rid of so easily," observed the King. "Well, let her stay: her malice is impotent."

"Not so impotent as your Majesty imagines. A woman can always make mischief."

"Oddfash! that's true enough," said the King. "I have had some experience of the dear Duchess's talent in that line. But there is no State Council to-day. Come with me to the Duchess of Portsmouth's apartments. You shall see how she bears her new honours."

"I was about to solicit permission to attend your Majesty," rejoined the Duke. "I am eager to pay my devoirs to her Grace."

With this, they quitted the cabinet by a private door, and proceeded along a narrow passage, used only by the King, to the Stone Gallery.

IV.

WHITEHALL.

THE Palace of Whitehall, in the time of Charles the Second, though not very magnificent, was of immense extent. Having no pretensions to uniformity of design, it looked like a collection of buildings of various sizes, rather than a single edifice; and such, indeed, would be the most correct description that could be given of it.

Portions had been rebuilt, and constant additions made, without reference to any particular plan. In spite of all this, it was one of those old, rambling, extraordinary piles, that are infinitely more agreeable to inhabit than a palace designed according to the strictest rule of art, and reared on the grandest scale, like Versailles.

Vast as it was, and containing endless apartments, Whitehall in the days of the Merry Monarch, whose aim was to have the gayest Court in Europe, was very much overcrowded.

Everybody connected with the Court, from the highest officers to those of the most inferior grade, had lodgings in the palace. The Lord Chamberlain, the Vice-Chamberlain, the Master of the Horse, the Gentlemen Ushers, the Grooms of the Privy Chamber, pages, purveyors, clerks, yeomen of the guard, the watermen belonging to the royal barges, footmen that might be counted by the hundred,—all were housed there.

Her Majesty the Queen had separate rooms, and a separate establishment of her own, religious as well as civil—the former comprising a grand almoner, three almoners, her confessor, two Portuguese preachers, six Benedictines, eleven Franciscan friars, and the musicians belonging to her chapel. All these, as well as her numerous household, inhabited the palace. The ladies of the bedchamber and the maids of honour likewise had rooms there.

Separated from the main body of the palace by a large court, though connected with it by a line of buildings, was the great banqueting-house, built by Inigo Jones, from a window of which the ill-fated Charles the First went forth to die. Hereabouts, was the Privy Garden, which was charmingly laid out in trim parterres in the French taste, and adorned with numerous statues in bronze and marble. In the midst was a curious dial.

Divided from the garden by a shady walk was the bowling green, where Charles recreated himself daily. A private passage,

contained within one of the gateways, built by Holbein in the time of Henry VIII, communicated with the tennis court and royal cock-pit.

In our hasty survey of the palace, we have said nothing of the domestic offices. As will easily be imagined, with such an enormous establishment to provide for, these were immense.

Where feasting was going on continually, many kitchens and many cooks were needed. There were flesh larders and fish larders, a great buttery, a confectionary, wine cellars and beer cellars, coach houses, and stables that held five score horses. Imagine the din and confusion occasioned by such a host of servants.

Many of the saloons and halls within the palace were sumptuously furnished; but the King's apartments were less splendid than those of his favourites. A great patron of the arts, as is well known, Charles the First had made an admirable collection of pictures; and though some of these were lost, the chief part had been recovered, and now adorned the walls of the great gallery.

Viewed from the river, whence it was seen to the greatest advantage, Whitehall, from its irregularity of outline, presented a very picturesque appearance. Though wanting in elevation, and having many architectural defects, unquestionably it was the pleasantest of royal residences, as its master, who knew better than any other monarch how to enjoy himself, perfectly understood.

The Stone Gallery, which the King and Buckingham had just entered, was of great length and ran along the whole north side of the palace. It overlooked the Privy Gardens, the two splendid Holbein Gates, and the Horse Guards.

This magnificent gallery, as we have incidentally remarked, was hung with fine pictures, and embellished with bronzes and statues.

On the left were several doors, communicating with various apartments; and on this side, also, was a smaller gallery, leading to the rooms appropriated to the Maids of Honour. At the entrance to the lesser gallery, two grooms of the chamber and an usher were stationed.

The grand gallery was thronged at the time with gaily attired courtiers, all of whom were amusing themselves in different ways: some were collected round a banquet-table, on which a great heap of gold was piled; others were

playing at cards; some were recounting their amorous adventures; while others were confiding billets-doux to the pages to deliver to their mistresses.

Jests and laughter resounded on all sides; nor did the merry groups become silent, or the gamblers disturb themselves from their play, on the appearance of the King and Buckingham. They knew the easy nature of the monarch too well, and presumed upon it.

Those, however, near whom the King passed, or whom his eye alighted upon, bowed reverently.

While the King was glancing around, his attention was attracted to a young gallant, who was talking to a page, and giving him a billet. This gallant turned away quickly, but not so quickly as to prevent Charles from discovering that it was Talbot Harland, whose sentence of banishment from Court he had not yet remitted.

His Majesty did not appear to notice the offender, but calling the page to him, took the note, and, finding it addressed to Miss Neville, went on.

Arrived at the corridor leading, as we have said, to the apartments of the Maids of Honour, Charles and the Duke entered it, and had not gone far when the King stopped, and tapped at a door, which was instantly opened by a chambermaid.

"Tell Miss Neville that Old Rowley has brought a note for her," said Charles.

On hearing his Majesty's voice, Dorinda, who was in an inner room, immediately came forth. Her confusion was very great, when she received the note, and saw from whom it came.

"Read it!" cried the King, feigning displeasure; "and tell me what it contains."

Dorinda was so agitated that she could not make out a word.

"Give it me," said Charles.

"Oh, no, no, sire!" she cried, with increased alarm. "Mr. Harland entreats me to obtain for him your Majesty's forgiveness, that is all. Pray pardon him, sire. The fault was mine, not his."

"I cannot pardon him, without pardoning Bellegarde," said the King.

"Then pardon both, sire," she cried.

"Hum!" exclaimed Charles; "you know how to communicate with your lover, I am sure. I left him in the Stone Gallery. Send him presently to the Duchess of Portsmouth's apartments, whither I am going. I will then hear what he has to say, and decide."

"I thank your Majesty in advance," cried Dorinda, with a look of profound gratitude.

V.

THE DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH'S BOUDOIR.

THE Duchess of Portsmouth's apartments were situated at the end of the gallery, and the windows looked upon the Thames.

They were the most charming rooms in the palace, and had been recently fitted up in a superb manner by the King. In the ante-chamber were Chiffinch and three or four pages.

As Charles and Buckingham entered, the tinkling of a guitar from within caught their ears while a very agreeable voice began to sing a French love ditty.

"Who is with the Duchess?" inquired the King, of Chiffinch.

"A French minstrel, sire," was the discreet valet's reply.

"'Tis Bellegarde, I'll be sworn," cried Buckingham.

"Oddsfish! it sounds like his voice," observed the King. "We will see."

And preventing Chiffinch from announcing him, he softly opened the door, and, raising the tapestry that masked it, looked in, while Buckingham peered over his shoulder.

A very charming picture was offered to their gaze.

The boudoir was most exquisitely furnished, and in the French style. Everything within it came from Paris, and many of the choicest articles, such as the massive silver sconces and braseros, the superb pendules, and the rich ornaments upon the chimney-piece, were presents from Louis XIV.

The walls were hung with Gobelin tapestry of marvellous beauty, representing hunting-scenes and views of Versailles and St. Germain. This tapestry was likewise the gift of the Grand Monarque.

Besides these, there were exquisite groups of figures, dainty baskets of the rarest porcelain, caskets encrusted with pearls, paintings by famous French artists, Japan cabinets, and screens.

Rose-coloured curtains subdued the light, while the atmosphere was redolent of perfume. The furniture consisted of small tables, canes, and fauteuils of the most graceful shape. Nothing, in short, was wanting that could add to the luxury of the room.

The beautiful Duchess, it appeared, had not quite completed her toilet.

Enveloped in a loose robe of sky-blue satin,

embroidered with lace, which, while it concealed her figure, displayed the loveliest neck in the world, she was reclining in a fauteuil, with her feet—and what charming little feet they were!—upon a velvet tabouret.

Two French tirewomen, both young, pretty, and coquettish-looking, were employed in combing out her magnificent black tresses. Ever and anon she cast a glance at a small mirror, encircled by feathers, to see that they performed their task satisfactorily.

Two persons, besides her attendants, were with the Duchess at the time. One of these was Sir Peter Lely, who was seated near a little table, with a portfolio before him, in which he was sketching the charming group.

The other was rather a singular figure, and seemed fresh from a masquerade, for he was wrapped in a black domino, and his features were concealed by a mask. This masquerader it was who was playing upon the guitar, and singing the French love-song to the Duchess; and so captivating were his strains, that the susceptible tirewomen almost neglected their task to listen to him.

The spectators of this charming scene might have remained undiscovered for a few minutes, if two little long-eared spaniels had not leaped up from a cushion, and betrayed them by their bark.

As the King and Buckingham appeared, the masquerader immediately ceased his song, and rising from the sofa on which he was seated, retired behind one of the screens.

Charles took no notice of the movement; but addressing the Duchess, said, "I have brought the Duke of Buckingham to pay his devoirs to you."

"Charmed to see your Grace," she replied, extending her fair hand to the Duke, who pressed it very gallantly to his lips, and proceeded to congratulate her in the warmest terms on her newly-acquired dignity.

"His Majesty will tell you how delighted I am," he said. "You are now on a par with the envious Duchess of Cleveland, if you cannot take precedence of her."

The Duchess tossed her head with so much disdain, that she pulled the comb from the hands of one of the tirewomen.

"I will take precedence of her!" she exclaimed. "She has tried to humiliate me; now I will humiliate her."

This explosion called back the King, who was talking to Lely, and admiring his sketch.

"I must tell you how I am obeyed," he said, anxious to turn the conversation. "While

passing through the Stone Gallery just now, I perceived Talbot Harland. Yes, he was there in defiance of my orders. How ought I to punish his disobedience?"

"I think he has been punished quite sufficiently," replied the Duchess. "Let me make his peace. I want to have poor Bellegarde back at Court. He is in despair at his long banishment, and will certainly return to France unless your Majesty relents. He is very much missed."

"By whom?" observed the King. "I have heard no one regret his absence. Have you?" he added, to Buckingham.

"Not I, sire," replied the Duke, taking the hint. "No one wants Bellegarde back. He was always winning our money, and not always winning it fairly; always getting into scrapes, and never getting creditably out of them; always boasting of his amours, though rarely successful; always relating tiresome stories, and never perceiving they were tiresome. I cannot deny that the fellow has some agreeable qualities; but, on the whole, we are better without him. I cannot vote for his recall."

"I should like to know what he has been doing during his exile?" remarked Charles.

"He has been following Rochester's example—amusing himself among the citizens, eating their dinners, and making love to their wives," replied the Duke. "Moreover, I hear he has been acting at the fairs as a saltimbanque and a charlatan, and I think it likely enough, for he has plenty of buffoonery."

"If I have not been misinformed, your Grace excelled in both characters, and made a vast deal of money by acting as a Jack-Pudding, and vending quack medicines," observed the Duchess of Portsmouth, rather sharply.

"Very true," rejoined Buckingham. "But, then, I sold my mithridate and galbanum to the Roundheads. Bellegarde, I fear, will only make money at the gaming-tables."

"I won't allow you to calumniate him any longer," said the Duchess. "Come forward, Achille, and confront your accuser."

On this, the masquerader threw off his domino and wizard, and prostrated himself before the King.

Charles bade him rise, in a good-humoured tone.

"Like Talbot Harland, you have not waited for my forgiveness before coming back, Count," he said. "Luckily, you have each a good friend at Court."

"I do not owe many thanks to the Duke of Buckingham, sire," said Bellegarde. "I did

not think his Grace capable of such perfidy."

"Bah!" cried the King. "Buckingham was only jesting. We both knew you were present."

"To be sure we did," cried the Duke, laughing. "I will now make amends, and retract all I have just uttered. You are the most honourable player I know—lose your money without losing your temper, and win without being elated. No one gets out of a scrape more adroitly; no one boasts less of his galantries; no one tells a story more agreeably. Will this satisfy you?"

"Perfectly," replied Bellegarde.

"Let me add that all the courtiers will be enchanted to have you back."

At this juncture, Chiffinch entered, and ushered in Dorinda, who was followed by Talbot Harland.

The latter, however, did not venture beyond a step into the room, until encouraged by a gracious look from his Majesty. He then threw himself at the King's feet.

"Mr. Harland did not dare to present himself without me, sire," said Dorinda, in an impressive tone.

"You did quite right to accompany him," observed Charles. "It is entirely to your intercession that he owes my forgiveness. You must take care he does not offend in like manner again."

"He shall not fight another duel on my account, if I can help it, sire," said Dorinda.

VI.

ARCHIGÈNE, THE FORTUNE-TELLER.

WHILE this was passing, the Duchess of Portsmouth had retired into an inner room to finish her toilette; and when she reappeared, it was in the most charming costume imaginable, which had just arrived from Paris.

Lely was in raptures, and began a fresh sketch.

During her Grace's absence, chocolate was served by two valets in the royal livery.

It was quite evident, from the King's manner to Bellegarde, that the Count was completely restored to the royal favour. While sipping his chocolate, Charles questioned him about his recent adventures.

"There is some little truth in what the Duke of Buckingham has been saying about me, I must own," said the Count. "Since I have been banished from your Majesty's presence, I have been obliged to amuse myself in the best way I could, and have played several

strange parts; among others, that of a fortune-teller.

"I took some lodgings near Spring Gardens; and announcing myself as the renowned Archigène de Luxembourg, *Disseur de bonnes Aventures à Madame de Montespan*, acquired immediate celebrity.

"Visits were paid me by most of the Court ladies. And as I was acquainted with many curious circumstances connected with them, I was able to tell their fortunes in a manner that convinced them that Archigène must be a veritable wizard.

"They all came to me in disguise; but I soon found them out, while not one of them recognised me in my flowing robe—adorned with mystical characters, tall, steeple-crowned hat, and huge green spectacles.

"I will betray no confidences; but I told a very distinguished lady, who visited me, that the highest honours would soon be bestowed upon her; and methinks my prediction has come to pass."

"Impossible you could have been the fortune-teller, Achille!" cried the Duchess of Portsmouth, laughing. "Why, he looked as old as Nostradamus."

"He was your Grace's humble servant, nevertheless," replied the Count.

"I may as well confess that I paid Archigène a visit," said Dorinda.

"You?" exclaimed Talbot.

"Yes. I went with my aunt, Lady Muskerrey. We were both completely disguised—"

"I defy Lady Muskerrey to disguise herself," cried Buckingham.

"Well, we were both dressed in close hoods and bands, like Puritan dames," replied Dorinda, "and were received by a pretty, dark-eyed page, who looked very much like a damsel in male attire, and were ushered into an inner room, where we found Archigène. His bent figure and his accents seemed to proclaim great age. My aunt first consulted him, and, after looking at her hand for a few minutes, he said, 'Your ladyship, I can see, is a widow; but you will have two more husbands, and will be married again before the year is out.'

"Her ladyship ought to have paid well for that prediction," observed the King, laughing. "A great silk purse full of gold was Archigène's reward, sire," said Bellegarde.

"Your fortune was told, of course?" cried Talbot.

"Certainly," rejoined Dorinda, "and a very nice fortune it will be, if it only comes

true; but I am not going to reveal it, especially to you."

"And my lips are sealed," observed Bellegarde.

"Enough of this fortune-telling," said the Duchess. "Are you aware, Mr. Harland, that we are going to Newmarket? I am looking forward to it with delight. I have never seen an English horse-race."

"Tis the finest sight in the world, and Newmarket is the best race-course in England," cried Talbot.

"I promise your Grace excellent sport," said the King. "I mean to win some of my own horses, and so does the Duke of York."

"Let us make a match, sire," cried Buckingham. "Talbot Harland is fond of racing, and rides well. Bellegarde is a first-rate jockey, as you know. I will back my Barbary mare, Mab, against your famous black horse, Bosco. The race to be for a gold cup, to be given between us, and to belong to the rider of the winning horse. Bellegarde shall ride Bosco, and Talbot Harland shall ride Mab. Is it a match?"

"Tis a match," replied Charles. "How say you, messieurs? Will you ride the race?"

Both expressed their readiness.

"What shall be the value of the cup, sire?" said Buckingham.

"It must be worth a struggle," rejoined the King. "I will give three hundred guineas, if you will add the like sum."

"Agreed!" cried the Duke.

"Bravo!" exclaimed Bellegarde, enchanted. "A six-hundred-guinea cup will be well worth a struggle!"

"Oh, how I should like to see the race!" cried Dorinda.

"You will see it," replied the King. "Her Majesty is going to Newmarket."

"I am delighted to hear it, sire," she rejoined.

"And this will be a race worth seeing, for the horses are well matched," observed Buckingham.

The discourse was proceeding very merrily, when a noise was heard in the ante-chamber, and the last person expected, and the least desired, the Duchess of Cleveland, burst into the room.

Chiffinch vainly attempted to oppose her entrance.

VII.

THE RIVAL DUCHESS.

DUMAY was painted on every countenance except that of the Duchess of Portsmouth, who didn't seem at all embarrassed by the unlooked-for appearance of her rival.

Anticipating a scene, at which she did not choose to assist, Dorinda made her escape as quickly as she could, and flew to her own apartments.

Though disliking nothing so much as these scenes, to which he was not unfrequently subjected by the violence of the Duchess of Cleveland's temper, the King was powerless to prevent them.

He uttered an exclamation of annoyance, and shrugged his shoulders, but did not attempt to interfere. Bellegarde made a droll grimace, and exchanged a glance with Buckingham. Both were secretly amused by the incident.

The Duchess of Cleveland stood still, and after scornfully surveying the beautiful objects in the boudoir, exclaimed, in a sarcastic tone, 'Mighty fine, upon my word! I have no room to compare to it.'"

"I am glad your Grace admires my boudoir," rejoined the Duchess of Portsmouth, who had advanced to meet her. "It is his Majesty's taste—not mine."

"The French King's taste, you mean," rejoined the other, rudely. "His English Majesty has wretched taste in furniture—as in everything else."

"Not in *everything*," said the Duchess of Portsmouth. "Surely, in one particular instance, he may be complimented on his taste."

"If he ever possessed any, he has lost it," rejoined the Duchess of Cleveland.

How handsome they looked, those two imperious women, as they gazed at each other with flashing eyes and flushed cheeks.

But the Duchess of Portsmouth, though highly incensed, possessed most command over herself.

"I will not for a moment suppose that your Grace has come here to insult me," she said, with dignity, "though your manner might lead to such a construction."

"Insult you! no! I have come to offer you my congratulations, as in duty bound."

"You do me too much honour," rejoined the other, haughtily.

"Your Grace seems to forget that I am

present," said the King, stepping forward, and addressing the Duchess of Cleveland.

"No wonder I should have overlooked your Majesty," she rejoined, without making him any reverence. "You are lost amid so many objects of attraction. I do not envy the Duchess of Portsmouth her charming boudoir, because I know she cannot enjoy it, since she has to tolerate the society of a royal master whom she dislikes—and deceives."

And she broke into a mocking laugh.

"Your Grace imagines that all women are made upon your own model," observed the Duchess of Portsmouth.

Her rival was about to make a sharp rejoinder, but the King interposed, exclaiming authoritatively to the Duchess of Cleveland—

"No more of this, madam. Comport yourself properly, or retire. You owe an apology to the Duchess of Portsmouth for this unwarrantable intrusion."

"I will make her none," cried the enraged dame, stamping her foot upon the floor. "And she may think herself fortunate that I do not dash in pieces some of her costly trinkets. Artful wretch! I should like to tear her eyes out."

"Protect me from this fury, sire," cried the Duchess of Portsmouth, with affected terror.

"Will you go, madam?" cried Charles.

"No!" replied the angry dame. "I have a great deal more to say to her; and may not have another opportunity. Not only has she rendered your Majesty supremely ridiculous to all your Court, but to your subjects. That a monarch who piques himself on his wit and cleverness, should become the dupe of a French *intriguante*, without any personal charms to recommend her, shows how well her plans have been laid."

"Oddfish" one would think I had never been duped before," remarked Charles. "At least, I have thrown off your fetters."

"To put on others far heavier," retorted the Duchess. "I daresay your new favourite will obtain you plenary indulgence from Rome for your numerous peccadilloes. She can do it, if she will."

"My Lord of Buckingham," said Charles, "be pleased to conduct the Duchess of Cleveland to her room. And let a guard be placed at the door."

"Am I to be made a prisoner in the palace?" she cried.

"Ay, till you come to your senses, and can handle your tongue," rejoined the King.

"I am the most injured woman in the king-

dom, and all the world shall know it," she cried.

"All the world knows it already," said Buckingham, advancing to take her hand.

But she motioned him off with a proud gesture.

"I will put an end to this scene, if your Majesty will permit me," whispered Bellegarde to the King.

"For heaven's sake, do so!" replied Charles.

"You will earn my eternal gratitude."

Upon this, the Count stepped towards the impracticable Duchess, and said to her, in a significant tone, "Your Grace will remember paying a visit to Archigène, the French fortune-teller—"

"I remember nothing about it," she interrupted, haughtily.

"On that occasion," pursued the Count, calmly, "you dropped a letter, which came into my possession. Behold it. 'Tis from Jacob Hall, the rope-dancer. Shall I read it to his Majesty? It cannot fail to divert him. The rope-dancer writes a charming letter."

"Read it—read it!" cried Charles.

"Shall I, or will you go?" said Bellegarde, to the Duchess, who was thrown into great confusion.

With an exclamation of rage, she snatched the letter from him, and rushed out of the boudoir.

"It was not from Jacob Hall," said Bellegarde to the King; "but it answered the purpose."

"A capital ruse!" cried Charles, laughing.

VIII.

NEWMARKET IN CHARLES THE SECOND'S TIME.

BOTH Charles the Second and the Duke of York delighted in racing, and gave great encouragement to the sport. Charles built a palace at Newmarket, to which he repaired, with a portion of his Court, whenever a meeting took place, and there were several during the year.

The architect of the palace at Newmarket was the famous Sir Christopher Wren; but the edifice was never entirely completed during the monarch's life-time—probably, from want of funds.

Sir Christopher Wren, though so great a man, and so lofty in his designs, was short in stature. The King liked the palace very much but found the rooms too low, and complained of the fault to the architect. "The rooms are high enough for me, sire," said Wren.

"Possibly, Sir Christopher," replied the King. "But they are too low for me."

We are apt to imagine that we have attained the perfection of racing now-a-days, and that the sport was very imperfectly understood two centuries ago. No mistake could be greater. The racing then was excellent. The disreputable tricks that have brought the Turf into deserved disgrace were unknown. There was no systematic betting. No "books" were made. Blacklegs there might be, though not such a fraternity as now exists; and there was no noisy "ring." The jockeys rode to win; and owners did not bet *against* their horses. Racing, though in its infancy, was conducted as it ought to be, and was consequently a noble sport.

Nor has the breed of horses improved. In Charles's days, there were Arabs of unmixed blood, of wonderful swiftness and endurance, and incomparable jennets.

The Duke of York had a splendid stud, even better than the King.

His Majesty had arrived at his palace at Newmarket, with the Queen, her ladies, and a portion of his Court, and was favoured, as royal persons generally seem to be, with magnificent weather. Nothing could be in better order than the turf, and nowhere is there such turf as on the Newmarket race-course.

The first day's racing was excellent, and the Duchess of Portsmouth was delighted. The sight more than realized her warmest expectations.

After the racing, which occupied the whole of the afternoon, there were the usual festivities at the palace.

The match between the King and the Duke of Buckingham formed the great event of the second day, and as it had been much talked about, a considerable concourse was gathered together to witness it.

Country gentlemen rode over from their seats in the neighbouring counties of Suffolk and Norfolk. Others had come from Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Ely, and twenty other places.

The farmers and hinds flocked to Newmarket from the surrounding districts, with their wives and daughters, quite as much to stare at the King and the Court ladies as to see the race for the gold cup.

With most of the assemblage, high or low, the Duchess of Portsmouth was the chief object of attention; and when she appeared by the side of Charles, mounted on a sprightly jennet, and attired in a superb blue velvet

riding-dress, laced with silver, she was generally admired, though she did not escape censure.

But here, as elsewhere, Dorinda Neville eclipsed all others.

The splendid train of Court dames and gallants, by which the King was attended, formed a charming picture—such as can never be seen again at Newmarket. The magnificent heath is still the same, but where are the lovely equestrians that graced it then? Where is the throng of handsome gallants, rustling in silk and velvet, that rode beside those fair dames, and diverted them with their jests? Where is the good-humoured monarch who headed them?

But hark! the bell rings. The race is about to be run.

No occasion to clear the course, for the crowd is not so great, after all. Many usages, now deemed indispensable, have not as yet been introduced, and when the horses make their appearance, their riders are on their backs.

Do not imagine for a moment that the riders are habited like jockeys of our own day. They wear Montero caps, and are attired in light and graceful riding-coats of velvet, differing, of course, in hue; Bellegarde's colour being green, and Talbot's blue.

Both horsemen look remarkably well, and ride up together to salute the King, and bow to the Queen, who is seated in a splendid calèche.

During this interval, the eyes of all the spectators are fixed upon them, and the capabilities of their horses eagerly canvassed.

Bosco, for many reasons, is the favourite, and, indeed, he deserves to be, for he is a splendid animal, in superb condition, with a coat shining like satin; but there are some who think the Barbary mare, who looks full of fire, has not a bad chance.

Badges are next bestowed on the riders. A green silk scarf, edged with gold, is placed over Bellegarde's shoulder by the Duchess of Portsmouth; while a scarf of white silk is bestowed on Talbot by Dorinda, who tells him to win.

Great is the excitement of the crowd during this performance.

Accompanied by the King and the Duke of York, Bellegarde now rides slowly along the course towards the starting-place, which is four miles off, while Talbot follows, accompanied by Buckingham.

Bosco maintains his prestige with the multitude; his action is magnificent. Very few

fancy Mab. Yet she has her backers; notwithstanding.

After riding with Bellegarde for about a mile, Charles and the Duke of York return amid the acclamations of the spectators.

A tedious interval now occurs, though enlivened by many droll incidents; but at last the exhilarating shout is heard, "They are off!" And this is echoed by a thousand voices.

For some time they seem to move but slowly, and appear close together; but when they get within a mile or so of the goal, they begin to try the powers of their horses.

Bosco is now clearly ahead, and the shouting spectators declare that he has already won the race. His Majesty is of the same opinion, and smiles at the Duchess of Portland. Dorinda's beautiful lip quivers with excitement, her cheeks flush, and her heart throbs violently.

The horses came on at a tremendous pace—Bosco still ahead, but not increasing his distance. The mare keeps well up, and does not seem in the least distressed.

The King begins to feel a little nervous, for he notices a peculiar smile on Buckingham's countenance.

The spectators have now become half frantic with excitement. The air rings with their shouts. "Bosco! Bosco!" resounds on all sides.

Bellegarde feels perfectly secure, and casts a backward glance of triumph at Talbot.

But, at the moment, he perceives his danger, and for the first time begins to use whip and spur.

The mare is gaining upon him—is close at hand! They are neck and neck together!

The frenzy of the crowd increases! Already they have become hoarse with shouting!

"Mab wins!" is now heard; and the cry stimulates Talbot, while it slightly disheartens Bellegarde.

'Tis a capital race, and almost promises to be a dead heat.

They are now within a hundred yards of the goal, and the maddened crowd closes behind them, as they dash on with lightning-swiftness.

Nearer and nearer they come, and still they are neck and neck.

Excitement is now at its highest pitch, and pervades all the beholders—Court dames, Court gentlemen, all.

"The King wins!" cry a thousand voices. "No—the Duke!" respond a thousand others.

To the last moment, the issue of the race is uncertain. Even the Duke of York and Lord Buckhurst, who are stationed at the winning-post as judges, are puzzled.

But there is no doubt at the last. With a bound, the mare springs forward, and wins by a head.

A tremendous shout rends the air, and for a few minutes the most tumultuous excitement prevails.

"Odds-fish!" exclaimed the King, looking rather blank. "I did not think Bosco would have been beaten. I have lost a thousand pounds on the race."

"And I have won two thousand," cried Buckingham, exultingly. "I knew what Mab could do. Talbot Harland has ridden her splendidly. He richly deserves the cup."

Shortly afterwards, the two riders, who had just been contending together so gallantly, forced their way through the dense crowd to the royal party.

Talbot looked flushed with triumph; but Bellegarde, though pale, bore his defeat with perfect composure. Everybody congratulated Talbot on his achievement. But the congratulations he cared for most were those of Dorinda Neville.

The magnificent gold cup, which had been displayed on a stand to the admiring assemblage, was then formally delivered to the winner by the Duke of Buckingham, in his Majesty's name and his own: and this little ceremony concluded the business of the race.

IX.

• AFTER THE RACE.

Among the spectators were four well-mounted individuals, who had watched the race with the keenest interest, and had strenuously backed Bosco.

There was nothing particular in their attire to distinguish them from the crowd with whom they were mingled, but to judge from the appearance of their horses, they had come from a distance—possibly, from Peterborough, for they said something about that ancient city, whether with the design of misleading those who overheard them, we will not pretend to say. Their riding coats were of a russet hue, and had evidently seen some service. The leader of the party was strongly built, and rather better dressed than his associates, and appeared to lay some authority over them.

A look had passed between this person and Bellegarde, as the latter rode towards the starting-place, and that betokened the student

horseman that all was right, and that Boco was sure to win. On this, he and his friends confidently backed the King's horse, and lost, amongst them, a considerable sum, that well-nigh emptied their pockets.

The voice of the stalwart horseman could be heard above the din of the crowd cheering on Boco, as the struggling racers rushed by; but how his countenance fell, and what a deep imprecation he uttered, when Bellegarde was beaten!

However, he soon recovered, and paid his losses with an air of unconcern. All four pushed forward amid the crowd to have a look at the cup, when it was delivered by Buckingham to Talbot, and its splendour increased their mortification.

"That cup ought to have been ours," whispered Montalt to his leader.

"It shall be ours yet," replied Colonel Blood, in the same tone.

And his greedy eyes followed the glittering prize as it was borne off to a place of safety by one of the royal servants.

Shortly afterwards, he contrived to get sufficiently near Bellegarde to exchange a word with him, and was told by the Count, in an undertone, that he would see him at night.

"I shall have something to say to you then," added Bellegarde, with a significant look.

"Relative to the cup?" asked Blood.

"Ay, ay," replied the Count, moving away.

Both riders of the race dined with his Majesty that day, and perhaps the gayest of the two was Bellegarde. Though rallied a good deal on his ill-luck by the Duchess of Portsmouth, next to whom he sat at table, he bore her raillery with the utmost good humour.

Naturally, Talbot was elated by his victory, and his satisfaction was heightened by the praises bestowed on his jockeyship by Dorinda. Had he dared do so, he would have offered her the rich prize he had won, and his hand along with it; but though the words were on his lips, they were never uttered.

After dinner, the Merry Monarch, as if to show that his defeat gave him little concern, tossed the winner of the cup, which was set upon the buffet with the other plates; and in reply, Talbot told his Majesty that, if he had not won a certain white coat, he should not have gained the prize. That caused him the victory. Dorinda blushed very much at this speech, but did not seem to be displeased by it.

However, being now even, this was the last evening at Newmarket for the royal party

was about to return to Whitehall on the morrow. Indeed, the Duke of York, Buckingham, and several others had already taken their departure. Bellegarde had ascertained that Talbot Harland did not mean to sleep at Newmarket that night, but to proceed to Cambridge. On hearing of Talbot's intention, the King asked him what he meant to do with the cup.

"Take it with me, sire, of course," replied the young man. "I shall put it in a bag, and the postboy will carry it for me."

"But are you not afraid of being robbed?" observed the King. "There are some strange characters at Newmarket. I have not heard that Claude Duval has been seen in these parts—indeed, the rascal seems to have disappeared altogether—but there are others just as dangerous, and not so polite. I will have it packed up with the rest of the plate."

"I thank your Majesty; but I wish to show it to my uncle, Dr. Harland, the Master of Trinity."

"*A la bonne heure!*" cried Charles. "But I fancy Dr. Harland will not approve of your turning jockey."

"The cup will propitiate him, sire. If he is pleased with it, I shall present it to him. I am his favourite nephew."

"I understand," replied the King.

This conversation was overheard by Bellegarde, who was talking to the Duchess of Portsmouth at the time, but he did not appear to notice it.

"I have a long ride before me to-night," he said. "I have promised to meet the Duke of Buckingham to-morrow morning, at Whitehall."

"*Graud dieu!*" she exclaimed. "You are not going to ride to London to-night?"

"'Tis only sixty miles," he rejoined, with a laugh. "True, the roads are not very good; but that does not matter. I shall do it in less than six hours, even if I fall asleep in the saddle."

"What are you saying about falling asleep in the saddle?" inquired the King, turning towards them.

"The Count is about to ride to London to-night, sire," replied the Duchess.

"Oddish!" exclaimed Charles. "Then I should advise him to start without delay."

"I understand," said the Duchess to make no mention to your Majesty."

"But why should he start?" asked Charles.

"He has promised to meet the Duke of Buckingham to-morrow morning."

"There will be dancing presently—ombre and basset," said the Duchess

"Great temptations; but I am not in luck to-day."

"Nay, follow your own inclinations," said the King. "*Bon soir, et bon voyage!*"

And with a profound reverence, Bellegarde departed.

X.

A RACE BY MOONLIGHT.

THE Count de Bellegarde must have been several miles on his way to London before Talbot Harland set out from Newmarket to Cambridge. A postboy accompanied him, carrying the gold cup, which had been carefully placed in a bag, slung from his shoulders.

It was a fine moonlight night, almost as bright as day, and Talbot promised himself a pleasant ride. He had no apprehension of danger, though he had pistols in his holsters.

The road to Cambridge lay along the wide heath, and followed the four-mile course over which he had ridden in the morning. How different were his present emotions from those which he had then experienced! He had then a desperate struggle before him, in which he might be defeated, and though full of ardour, and resolved, if possible, to win, fortune might not befriend him. Now his triumph was assured. Moreover, he had distinguished himself in the eyes of one whom it was his chief desire to please.

Full of these pleasant thoughts, he cantered along the elastic turf, closely followed by the postboy, who cracked his whip merrily, as if proud of the burden he bore. He, too, was in good spirits, for he had betted upon the mare, and had been promised a cup of strong Trinity ale when he arrived at Cambridge. We fancy he had emptied a horn of the like potent beverage before starting from Newmarket.

The wide heath, which had been covered in the morning with persons scampering over it in all directions, was now completely deserted. Only a solitary horseman could be descried, and he appeared to be travelling in the same direction as themselves, though he was more than half a mile ahead.

Very beautiful looked the broad expanse, bathed as it was in the moonbeams—more beautiful than when seen by the garish light of day. A moonlit heath is always a charming sight, but there was an inexpressible charm about Newmarket Heath on that lovely night. At least, Talbot Harland thought so.

Perfect stillness reigned around. A distant

hum from the little town they had quitted alone reached the ear. But this sound soon ceased. Black shadows were thrown upon the turf, as the horsemen speeded over it. The air was cold, but its freshness calmed Talbot's excitement.

They were now about five miles from Newmarket, and within a mile of Bottisham, but had not yet reached the limits of the heath, when the cry of a screech-owl caught Talbot's ear, and startled him as well as the postboy.

They both looked round, expecting to see the ill-omened bird fly past, but could distinguish nothing. The cry, however, seemed to have alarmed the traveller, whom they had now nearly overtaken, for he halted, as if wishing to join them.

Next minute, the screech-owl's harsh voice was heard again; but this time the cry came from a different quarter. The invisible bird must have flown on.

All at once, the idea flashed upon Talbot that these cries were signals, and the correctness of the supposition was confirmed by the sudden appearance of three well-mounted horsemen, who emerged from a hollow near the road, where they had lain concealed.

Talbot instantly comprehended the peril in which he stood, and his alarm was shared by the postboy, who called out, "Robbers, sir, robbers! Turn back, and ride for your life!"

"Ride back to Newmarket, and leave me to deal with them," rejoined Talbot. "Ride as if the fiend were at your heels."

The postboy, who was thoroughly scared, needed no second bidding, but started off at once. He had not proceeded many yards, however, when he was stopped by two other horsemen, who burst upon him from behind some tall furze-bushes.

"Halt a minute, my lad," cried one of these men, in a jeering tone. "We have a few words to say to you. You appear to have something valuable in that bag slung from your shoulder. What is it?"

"Nothing but an old leather bottle, an' please your honour, not worth taking," rejoined the trembling postboy.

"We shall see that anon," said the other horseman, who was much more strongly-built than his companion, and wore a mask. "Deliver it up, sirrah, without delay!"

But, though greatly terrified, the postboy did not like to surrender the treasure. Retreating towards Talbot, who was now parlaying with the others, he called out lustily for help.

• EDITH EDWARDS SLAUGHTERED BY THE DUCHESSE. (See page 100.)



The traveller, who had preceded the young man across the heath, turned out to be the captain of the band.

He was masked, but, before he uttered a word, Talbot had recognised him. That slight, graceful figure, those gay habiliments, the black flowing peruke, the hat surrounded by white feathers, could belong to no other than the gallant Claude Duval.

Duval had lost none of his courtesy, and it was with marked politeness that he addressed the luckless young gentleman who had fallen into his hands. His accent, when he spoke, was as marked and peculiar as ever.

"Permit me to offer you my congratulations on your success to-day, Mr. Talbot Harland," he said. "I saw the race run, and can affirm that you rode admirably—far better than your opponent. Though the Count is my compatriot, and I would fain uphold him, truth compels me to declare that he is a very bad jockey. I think I could have beaten you, if I had been in his place."

"You think so?" cried Talbot, amused by this address.

"I flatter myself I could," rejoined Duval. "You may remember that I have beaten you on a former occasion."

"That was not exactly a race," observed Talbot. "You were riding, then, you know, for your life."

"Granted," said Duval. "Now give me a moment's attention. I have a proposition to make. Perhaps it may be agreeable to you to accept it. It is this. I know you have with you the gold cup which you won so cleverly this morning. I need not say that I could take it from you, if I chose. But I would rather win it fairly. We will have a race for it, if you please."

"A race!" exclaimed Talbot. "Faith! that is a novel idea."

"Novelty has always a charm," observed Duval. "If I am the winner, the cup will be mine, of course. If you are lucky for the second time, 'twill be yours absolutely. No one shall deprive you of it. I will answer for my comrades."

"We will answer for ourselves," interposed Blood. "Had I been consulted, I would not have recommended such a proposal; but, since it has been made by Captain Duval, we will all abide by it."

"We will," cried the others.

"How say you, sir?" cried Duval. "Is it to be a race? I hope you will not place me under the disagreeable necessity of—"

"I agree," said Talbot hastily. "Where is the trial to take place?"

"On the race-course," rejoined Duval. "We will ride thither at once. The distance to be one mile."

"A mile be it," said Talbot. "I am content."

A few words, in an undertone, then passed between Duval and Blood; and when their brief colloquy was over, the latter said to Talbot, "You are armed, sir; to prevent mischief, I must require you to deliver up your pistols to me."

The young man hesitated.

"Will you give me your word that you will not use them?" said Duval.

"I promise not to use them unless I am assailed," replied Talbot.

"Enough!" cried Duval. "*Allons donc, messieurs!*"

He then rode off in the direction of the race-course, and the whole troop followed, Talbot being so completely surrounded that escape would have been impossible even if he had meditated the attempt. Close behind him came the postboy, with a guard on either side.

Affairs having taken a very different turn from what he expected, this youth had long since ceased his clamour, and, indeed, was secretly delighted at the prospect of witnessing a very singular race. He would fain have conversed with his captors, but they returned no answer to his questions, and at last bade him hold his tongue.

Duval kept upon the turf, at some distance from the road. No travellers, however, were to be seen; nothing, in short, except a waggon from Bury St. Edmunds, toiling on its way to Cambridge. The waggoner stared at the troop as it went by, but did not stop.

Ere long, they reached the race-course, and entered it at the point from which Bellegarde and Talbot had started in the morning. But this was now destined to be the winning-post, and Blood stationed himself near it, with the postboy and his two guardians, while Duval and Talbot rode on, accompanied by Montalt and Flodoard.

As they proceeded, each rider for the cup carefully examined his adversary's horse, and the result of the scrutiny, on either side, was that they were fairly matched.

Montalt and Flodoard were of the same opinion, and thought it would be a good race. Both chargers were powerful, and well bred. Of their relative swiftness it was not easy to

judge; that would be tested anon. In colour, the horses were scarcely distinguishable by that light; though Duval's was bright bay, and Talbot's sorrel.

When they had ridden a mile, as they judged, they came to a halt, and Duval proposed that Montalt should start them, to which the other agreed.

They then placed themselves without loss of time, and, the word being given, they dashed off together like arrows from a bow, making it evident from the outset that this would be no lingering race. Montalt and Flodour followed as they might; and though both spurred on their steeds, they were speedily left behind.

It was a strange sight to witness such a contest at such an hour. Seen by that witching light, the two adversaries, as they flew along, side by side, and in silence, might have been taken for phantom horsemen.

Talbot was scarcely less eager to win this race, than he had been to win that of the morning. His blood was now up. Duval was even more excited. He felt as if he had a defeat to efface. He made every effort to leave his adversary behind, but Talbot stuck closely to him.

On—on they went, without change of position. To those who watched them from afar, they looked as if blent together. Colonel Blood chafed with impatience at the strange spectacle; and, at length, unable to restrain himself, he rode towards them.

He had not gone far, when one of the figures detached itself from the other, but in that doubtful light he could not make out who was leading. He feared it was Talbot Harland, and under this impression, he cursed Duval for his folly in giving him this chance for the cup.

But his doubts were speedily removed, and his rage gave way to transports of delight. He now clearly perceived that Duval was in front, and expressed his satisfaction at the discovery by a loud shout, which was echoed by the troopers in charge of the postboy, and even by the postboy himself, though the latter scarcely knew why he shouted.

Though the result of the contest was no longer doubtful—at least, to Blood,—Talbot maintained a gallant struggle to the last. He would not give in. To the last, he plied whip and spur. But all his efforts were fruitless—the race was Duval's.

Amid the cheers of his comrades, with which those of the reverent postboy were

mingled, the robber captain came in triumphantly.

It must be borne in mind that Duval never for a moment removed his mask during the race—nor did he remove it now—so that the effect of his victory could not be discerned upon his features. But his manner did not betray the slightest excitement, nor did the exertion of the contest seem to have disturbed him much.

Talbot, on the contrary, appeared quite overcome, and his accents were hoarse. Noticing his condition, Blood produced a pocket-flask, and, filling a small silver cup with brandy, offered it to him. The young man did not decline the attention.

"You have fairly won the race, and the prize is yours," he observed to Duval.

"I almost grieve to deprive you of it," replied the other. "But I must keep it as a trophy. Pray tell the Count De Bellegarde that I esteem him an indifferent jockey."

By this time, Montalt and Flodour had come up, and offered their congratulations to the winner. At the same time, they good-naturedly essayed to console Talbot Harland for his defeat.

The gold cup was next taken from the bag, and the postboy was compelled to offer it to Duval—an order which he obeyed with a very bad grace. The magnificent vessel sparkled brilliantly in the moonlight, and the whole scene at this moment was exceedingly striking and picturesque.

The sight of the splendid cup roused fierce feelings in Talbot's breast, and, for a single moment, the desire of snatching it from the robbers, possessed him. But he was deterred from the insane attempt, by the pledge he had given.

Blood, who was near him, perceived what was passing in his breast, and kept his hand upon a pistol.

Meanwhile, the flask of brandy was rapidly passed from hand to hand, and the little silver cup as quickly filled and emptied. The last to empty it was the postboy. Duval having sufficiently admired his prize, it was restored to the receptacle from which it had been taken, and committed to the care of Mandeville.

"Am I at liberty to depart?" said Talbot, to Duval.

"As soon as you please," rejoined the other. "Accept my thanks for the sport you have afforded me. If you return to Newmarket, pray describe our race to his Majesty. I am sorry he did not witness it."

"The race is not yet over," rejoined Talbot, sternly. "As soon as I can procure assistance, I will be on your track."

With this, he struck spurs into his horse's flanks, and dashed off, followed by the postboy, who had been set free at the same moment.

Almost immediately afterwards, Duval and his band were scouring across the heath in the opposite direction, all laughing heartily at the adventure.

• XI.

TALBOT HARLAND PRESENTS THE GOLD CUP TO THE DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH.

The King and the Court had returned from Newmarket to Whitehall.

On the morning after his arrival, Charles was in the Duchess of Portsmouth's boudoir, and her Grace was complaining of the fatigue of her journey, when the Duke of Buckingham was announced.

After the Duke had made his reverence, and paid some well-merited compliments to the Duchess on her looks, the King said to him, "Did you see Bellegarde yester-morning? He told me he had an appointment with you."

"Yes, sire. He came to me before I was up, looking as fresh almost as her Grace, though he had ridden from Newmarket during the night."

"Can you tell us at what hour he reached Whitehall?" observed the Duchess. "His Majesty is curious on the point."

"I can give you precise information," replied Buckingham. "He arrived here at four o'clock in the morning, and as the palace gates were closed, he had to knock up the porter."

The Duchess glanced at the King.

"He performed the distance under six hours," pursued Buckingham; "and all things considered, I regard it as a wonderful feat."

"It would be a wonderful feat, indeed, if he rode that second race with Talbot Harland," observed Charles.

"What second race, sire?" cried Buckingham. "I have not heard of it."

The King then related the extraordinary adventure that had befallen Talbot; and the Duke laughed heartily at the recital.

"This Claude Duval is a ducedly clever fellow," he exclaimed. "His exploits have all the air of practical jokes."

"I have always said so," observed Charles.

"This may turn out the best of them. Talbot Harland started from Newmarket in pursuit of the robbers, but I doubt his success."

"I have heard nothing of him," replied Buckingham.

At this moment the person in question was announced.

"What news of Claude Duval?" cried the King, as Talbot came in. "Have you captured him?"

"I am deeply mortified to be obliged to answer no, sire," replied the young man. "He and his band seem to have dispersed on quitting the heath. I could discover no traces of them."

"So you have lost the cup, after all, I find," cried Buckingham, in a jeering tone. "I thought you would have taken better care of it."

"I deserve all the ridicule your Grace can heap upon me," rejoined Talbot. "But I hope you will be generous, and spare me."

"If I spare you, Sedley and Etherego won't. I will treat you as tenderly as I can, but I must add, however, a few more couplets to my ballad."

"That ballad will never end," remarked the Duchess, laughing.

"Not as long as Claude Duval remains at large," said the King. "But here comes Bellegarde," he added, as the Count was ushered into the room by Chiffinch.

Bellegarde's countenance was radiant with satisfaction.

"Judging from your looks, Count, you have something pleasant to tell us," observed Charles.

"Your Majesty is not mistaken," rejoined Bellegarde, with a low bow. "I am very glad to find Mr. Talbot Harland here, as what I have to say concerns him."

"Let us hear it," said the King. "I'll warrant your story relates to the cup."

"Your Majesty has a remarkable power of guessing," replied Bellegarde, again bowing deeply. "This morning, while I was dressing, my valet brought a letter, accompanied by a very strange-looking bag, apparently containing a piece of plate. Without pausing to examine the contents of the bag, I opened the letter, and you will judge of my surprise when I found that it came from Claude Duval. With your Majesty's permission, I will read it to you."

"MONSIEUR LE COMTE,—

"I have redeemed the honour of our country, which you had endangered.

"In the race which you ran at Newmarket, in the presence of his Majesty and the Court."

you proved yourself a vastly inferior horse-man to Mr. Talbot Harland.

"Unable to bear this national reproach, I provoked Mr. Harland to another contest. I came off victorious. The glory of France is untarnished.

"But, for reasons which I need not particularize, the prize I have won cannot remain in my hands. I therefore send it to you, Monsieur le Comte—to you, who, as an accomplished *écuyer*, ought to have won it; leaving you to dispose of it as you may deem fit. *Vive la France!*"

"*Votre dévoué,*
"CLAUDE DUVAL."

When the merriment caused by this letter had subsided, Bellegarde clapped his hands slightly, and at the signal the door opened, and Chiffinch entered, followed by a couple of pages, bearing the splendid racing-cup on a large silver tray.

At this sight, everybody expressed the greatest surprise.

"Oddfish!" exclaimed the King. "This is a real *coup de maître!*"

"I brought the cup with me, to show it to your Majesty," said Bellegarde. "And I am charmed to have the opportunity of restoring it, in your presence, to Mr. Talbot Harland, to whom it rightfully belongs. I know nothing about the contest to which Monsieur Claude Duval refers, nor is it anything to me; but I know that I was fairly beaten, and that I have no claim whatever to the prize."

The cup was then presented to Talbot by the pages, who bade them to lay it down on a table. This done, they withdrew with Chiffinch.

"I am inexpressibly indebted to you, Count," said Talbot to Bellegarde.

"Not in the least, *mon cher*," replied the other. "Whatever Monsieur Claude Duval may think, I am not a receiver of stolen goods."

"A capital joke! and capital! played!" exclaimed the King, who was ready to die with laughter.

"The thing looks like a jest, sire," observed Bellegarde. "But if it is one, I have had no part in it. I hope Mr. Talbot Harland does not think so."

"No one knows better than I do, Count, that you could not possibly have been concerned in it," cried Talbot, earnestly.

"Oddfish! this is delicious," exclaimed the King. "Now you have got back the cup," he

added to Talbot, "you can carry out your design, and propitiate your venerable uncle, Dr. Harland."

But the young man had observed that the Duchess of Portsmouth had already set her eyes on the treasure.

He therefore said, "Excuse me, sire; I have another destination for it. The cup suits this room so well, that I trust her Grace will allow it to remain here."

"*Grand dieu!* do you mean to present it to me?" exclaimed the Duchess, delighted.

"I entreat that honour," replied Talbot.

"You are a model of gallantry," she cried, with one of her sweetest smiles. "Is he not, sire? The cup is exquisite; but it is doubly valuable from the little history attached to it."

"Ay, marry," observed the King; "you must not forget that, but for Monsieur Claude Duval, this gem would not have found its way to your collection."

While chocolate was being served, Charles took Bellegarde into the embrasure of a window overlooking the river, and said to him, "There is a little matter which you must execute for me, Count."

"Ever proud to obey your Majesty's behests," replied Bellegarde.

"To you, the affair will present no difficulty," pursued the King: "I want to discover the leader of the murderous attack upon the Duke of Ormond."

"Permit me to observe, sire, that you impose upon me a very arduous task, and one to which I am quite unequal. A very large reward has been offered by your Majesty for the capture of that person, and if the officers of justice have failed to arrest him, it is not likely I shall be more successful."

"I will give you a hint that may help you—I am certain he is known to Buckingham. Commence your search in that quarter."

"Possibly, your Majesty may be right," rejoined Bellegarde. "I do not like to play the spy; but, in the present instance, I must contrive to overcome my scruples."

"Tis to serve me," said Charles. "If you make any discovery, communicate with me at once. I want to see the man."

"To see him arrested, I presume, sire?"

"To confer with him," rejoined Charles, with a singular smile.

"It must occur to your Majesty that such a man is scarcely likely to trust himself——"

"He may do so," interrupted the King. "Give him that assurance from me. 'Twill be enough for him."

"It ought to be enough," said Bellegarde.
 "Still, he may fancy it a snare."

"If he hesitates, say that I have not forgotten what passed at Knole. One thing more, and I have done. The man I seek was at Newmarket."

"At Newmarket, sire!" exclaimed the Count, surprised.

"I heard his voice amid the crowd; but could not distinguish the speaker. He would not be hovering about me thus, if he had not some sinister design—perhaps, against my life."

"Sire!"

"Nay, I have no fear," rejoined the King; "but it is important that I should see him without delay. Buckingham will not serve me—you must."

And they quitted the embrasure.

Meanwhile, the company had been increased

by Lady Muskerry and Dorinda, Lord Buckhurst, Sedley, Etherege, and others, all of whom were amazed to see the gold cup, and highly amused to hear by what strange means it had got there.

To show that she was not devoid of gratitude, the Duchess of Portsmouth was lavish in Talbot's praises, and she contrived to do him a slight favour.

It appeared that their Majesties were going that morning, in the royal barge, to the Tower, to inspect the Crown jewels, which the Duchess had not yet seen; and as Dorinda must necessarily be in attendance on the Queen, Talbot, to his great delight, was invited by the Duchess of Portsmouth to join the party.

This was what he gained by the gold cup; and, being desperately in love, he considered himself amply repaid.

BOOK THE THIRD.

THE CROWN JEWELS.

I.

A ROYAL PROMENADE ON THE THAMES.

ABOUT an hour later, attended by a throng of Court dames and gallants, among whom were all those who had been assembled in the Duchess of Portsmouth's apartments, their Majesties entered the royal barge, which was moored off the privy stairs of the palace.

Very gorgeous was the barge, almost as grand as the Venetian Bucentaur, in which, in old times, the Doge of Venice went forth to wed the sea; magnificently sculptured, and so richly gilt that its reflection seemed to turn the water to flame. Internally, this grand barge was nothing more than a splendid saloon, fitted up with luxurious couches, and having large windows that commanded a view of all around.

Four-and-twenty remarkably good-looking young watermen—wearing scarlet jerkins, with the royal badge on their sleeves, and directed by the barge master, who was naturally more grandly arrayed than his men, and bore the royal cognizance, embroidered in gold on his breast—were required to row the barge; but so heavy was it, that they made but slow way, if the tide chanced to be against them, as was the case on the present occasion.

Trumpeters, whose silver clarions were decked with crimson flags woven with the royal arms, made the walls of the palace ring with joyous fanfares, as their Majesties set forth on their promenade on the river.

When filled with the brilliant company we have described, the long saloon presented a splendid sight.

The day was delightful; and the surface of the Thames smooth as a mirror, and sparkling with sunshine. The Thames was then a noble river; its waters, if not positively transparent, were clear and bright, and constantly covered

with a multitude of craft of all shapes and sizes; while its banks were rendered picturesque by quaint old structures.

A water-party was then a favourite diversion with the citizens, and nothing could be more agreeable. The Merry Monarch was as fond of the amusement as any of his subjects. Lolling out of an open window of the barge, and gazing at the occupants of the numerous boats and wherries that passed by, he saw a hundred objects that entertained him, while the remarks—not unfrequently about himself—that reached his ear, provoked his laughter. Old Rowley could bear a jest at his own expense better than any man.

Near him, as he now looked out at the lively scene, were the Duchess of Portsmouth and Bellegarde, both of whom were quite as much diverted as his Majesty.

At the next window were Talbot and Dorinda, but the young man was more engrossed by his lovely companion than by the spectacle before him. He gazed at her, and not at the river.

How the fest of the brilliant company amused themselves we need not inquire. Lively smiles, and light laughter were heard on all sides.

They had now passed gloomy Bridewell, which cast a black shade on the shining stream, and the great dungeon-like pile known as Baynard's Castle, and had just come in sight of London Bridge, when a wherry, partly covered by an awning, and manned by two vigorous oarsmen, who might possibly be prentices, but were certainly not common watermen, passed by.

The boat was sufficiently near to allow the King to distinguish its occupants. Beneath the awning sat a damsel, whose lovely features instantly caught his attention. Could he forget those magnificent black eyes, and the superb raven tresses? He knew her at once. It was Violet Oldacre. And the strongly-built

man who was steering the boat, must be her father.

With the instinct of jealousy, the Duchess of Portsmouth had made the same discovery at the same moment, but she said nothing. Charles, however, was so excited that he called out to Bellegarde—

"Look, Count! whom do you see in that boat?"

"A very charming creature, sire," rejoined Bellegarde, with affected indifference.

"Do not affect ignorance," rejoined the King. "You know her as well as I do."

"Do you call that creature beautiful?" cried the Duchess, with a mocking laugh. "I think her frightful."

"Why don't you stand up in defence of your mistress, Count?" said the King, laughing.

"My mistress, sire! I don't even know her."

"*Fi donc!*" cried Charles, laughing incredulously. "You ought to be proud of her. She does credit to your taste."

"Sire, I accept your compliments, though I do not deserve them," said Bellegarde, shrugging his shoulders.

At this juncture, the stalwart individual, who acted as coxswain, sang out lustily to the oarsmen. The words were nothing, but they struck the King forcibly, and almost made him start.

"That is the voice I heard at Newmarket!" he said, in a significant tone, to Bellegarde.

"Indeed, sire!" exclaimed the Count, scarcely able to disguise his confusion.

"I am certain of it," rejoined the King. "Now you know what to do."

The oarsmen had been ordered by the coxswain to pull away rapidly, and they obeyed with such alacrity that the wherry had already shot off to some distance.

In her flight past the royal barge, Violet had not only been recognised by the King, but by Talbot and Dorinda; and, yielding to the impulse of the moment, the latter made a sign with her fan to the fair occupant of the wherry. It was this sign that made her father order the oarsmen to pull off.

II.

THE JEWEL TOWER.

The royal barge passed safely through the centre arch of London Bridge, and was subsequently moored off Tower Wharf, where a double line of warders, armed with their halberds, was drawn up.

The Duchess of Portsmouth, to whom this

scene was new, was much struck with the appearance of the ancient fortress, especially with the dark and low-browed arches of Traitors' Gate, and with the stern and massive White Tower; but she could not discern any resemblance between the vast and sombre pile and the Bastille, to which her thoughts naturally recurred.

Loud flourishes from the trumpeters had announced the arrival of the King, and had summoned forth all the principal officers of the fortress.

On disembarking, their Majesties were received with much ceremony by the Lieutenant of the Tower, and Sir Gilbert Talbot, master and treasurer of the Jewel Tower.

Sir Gilbert Talbot, we may mention, had been appointed to the post by Charles, on the Restoration, and though some of the privileges and emoluments of the office had been abolished by Lord Chancellor Clarendon, it was still valuable and important, the perquisites amounting to 1,500*l.* yearly—a large sum in those days. Sir Gilbert was uncle, on the mother's side, to Talbot Hurland.

The royal party next crossed the drawbridge that spans the moat near the By-ward Tower, and proceeding along the outer ward, passed through the dismal arch of the Bloody Tower, and so gained the inner ward, in the midst of which is reared the majestic White Tower.

The King's visit being perfectly private, no preparations had been made, and only the ordinary officials and warders were in attendance, but a company of musketeers was being exercised on the parade, and drums were beaten as their Majesties appeared.

Charles having signified his intention of inspecting the regalia, Sir Gilbert Talbot hastened on to the Jewel Tower; and while he was gone, the royal party remained on the green.

This brief detention allowed the Duchess of Portsmouth an opportunity of surveying the White Tower and the chain of smaller towers surrounding the inner ward, in both of which State prisoners were then confined; but she turned aside with horror when a bare spot, marked by white stones, was pointed out to her, and the King added, in a low tone, that it was the place of execution, where Catherine Howard and Anne Boleyn had fallen by the headsmen's axe.

Shortly afterwards the royal party were conducted to the Jewel Tower, which is situated at the north-east angle of the inner ward. Originally, this structure was known

as the Martin Tower, and had been used as a prison lodging until it became the depositary of the regalia.

The history of the Crown jewels is extremely curious, but it would occupy too much time to narrate it in full. Repeatedly pledged by successive monarchs, and conveyed away to Paris and Flanders, pawned almost in detail by the unhappy Henry the Sixth, they were again gathered together by the Tudors, and considerably augmented in number. A careful inventory was made of them by James the First, who frequently gloated over his treasures.

At last, they came into possession of Charles the Second, and, if he could have ventured to do so, no doubt the Merry Monarch would have pawned them, as his predecessors had done. It was in his reign that the regalia were first exhibited to the public. Hitherto they had been kept in strong iron chests, in a secret chamber in the White Tower, and only inspected with the utmost caution; but they were now removed to the Martin Tower, which, thenceforward, changed its name to the Jewel Tower.

The chamber in which the Crown jewels were deposited was on the first story of the tower in question. Built of stone, with walls of enormous thickness, an arched and groined roof, deep embrasures, terminated by narrow loopholes, a ponderous door, studded with nails, and having a huge lock, the room seemed perfectly secure.

The greater part of the treasures were placed on open shelves, covered with crimson velvet, and ranged on one side of the chamber.

Conspicuous among these was the imperial crown, which had been made for Charles's own coronation, and which glittered with diamonds of the first water, rubies, pearls, emeralds, and sapphires. Next to it was the crown of state, likewise made for Charles, garnished with an emerald that might have come from Aladdin's palace, a price-less ruby, and the finest pearl in the world.

Beside these, there were three crowns assigned to the Queen, each adorned with diamonds and pearls; the orb, which, we need scarcely say, is a large ball of gold, embellished with roses of diamonds and other precious stones; the ampulla, destined to contain the holy oil employed at the coronation; St. Edward's staff; the King's two sceptres, each of gold, and garnished with diamonds of inestimable value, and the Queen's sceptre, with the cross.

These treasures, and a hundred others, which we have not time to describe, were only protected by a thick crimson curtain, which, of course, was drawn aside when they were exhibited.

III.

TALBOT EDWARDS.

THE custodian of the Crown jewels at the time of our story was an old man named Talbot Edwards. He was a kinsman of Sir Gilbert Talbot, and being, in reduced circumstances, was appointed by the Master-Treasurer to the post as a provision for his old age. A better guardian could not have been chosen. The brave old gentleman—for a gentleman he was by birth as well as in bearing—would have sold his life rather than part with the treasures confided to him. He was a Welshman, and, though poor, excessively proud, and somewhat quick-tempered, but much liked.

Old Edwards led a very agreeable life in the Jewel Tower, though he was sometimes rather troubled by the tremendous responsibility imposed upon him. Many strangers came to see the treasures, and from these he received small gratuities, that eked out his modest salary. The worthy old gentleman was married, his wife being much younger than himself, and having still some pretensions to good looks. Moreover, he had a daughter, Edith, who was accounted the prettiest girl in the Tower, and whom he was very anxious to see married.

Such was the personage who had the honour of attending upon the royal party during their inspection of the regalia. Sir Gilbert Talbot was likewise in attendance; but the treasures were lifted from the shelves and displayed by Edwards. His extreme formality was almost ludicrous. However, he was courtier enough to feel that he ought to pay special attention to the Duchess of Portsmouth, and he had no difficulty in doing so, as she was now near the King.

"What think you of those baubles?" said Charles, to the Duchess, who, was in perfect ecstasies at the sight.

"Magnificent!" she replied. "I long to carry off the whole collection."

"Will it please your Grace to look at the imperial crown?" said Edwards, exhibiting it to her. "I pray you to notice that it is formed of four crosses, and four fleurs-de-lis of gold, rising from a golden circle."

"What lovely oval pearls!" she exclaimed. "Any one of them would content me."

"Your Grace must see the pearl on the

crown of state. "Tis the finest in the world!" said the custodian.

And he held up the other crown to her view.

"Ah, *mon Dieu!* what a pearl! what an emerald! what a ruby!" exclaimed the Duchess.

The enamoured monarch looked up, as if he could have presented them to her.

"I can show your Grace plenty of other gems, but none like these," said Edwards. "Here is her Majesty's crown, set with diamonds and pearls."

But the Duchess could think of nothing but the splendid emerald and the inestimable ruby which she had just seen. Collars of enamelled gold containing table diamonds were next exhibited; rings set with topazes, sapphires, and rubies; brocade of enamelled gold, diamond flowers and diamond feathers; caranets, crosses, and tablets,—all set with precious stones of immense value.

Never had the Duchess's cupidity been so strongly excited. But she was not the only person excited. Strange thoughts passed through Bellegarde's breast as he examined the jewels.

IV.

EDITH EDWARDS.

THE old custodian had now enough to do to attend to the many fair dames that thronged around him, curious to examine the collars, chains, and smaller ornaments; and as he was unwilling to trust any of the jewels out of his own hands, he was obliged to call in the aid of his wife and daughter, who were standing near the door, probably awaiting a summons.

Mrs. Edwards, whom we have already described as a comely woman, was composed enough but Edith was suffused with blushes, as she stood before the courtly throng, and heard the many remarks passed upon her by the gallants. As their remarks, however, were highly complimentary, they could not have been altogether disagreeable, as the fair damsel had some coquetry in her nature.

This was not the first time that her charms had been praised, though by a very different class of admirers. Now she was exposed to the gaze of some of the boldest rakes in town, and Buckingham, Etherege, and others ogled her most unmercifully. Rather a formidable ordeal, it must be owned, but she stood it tolerably well.

Edith resembled her mother, rather than her father, who was tall and gaunt, and with

strongly pronounced features. Her figure was charmingly proportioned, but rather full; her eyes blue, and tender in expression; her complexion exquisitely fair, and her golden tresses as beautiful as those of Queen Elizabeth in her younger days.

Moreover, she had very white and very daintily-formed hands, that could not fail to be observed as she held up the jewels for inspection.

Many a Court dame envied her those taper fingers. Many an inflammable Court gallant was scorched by her superb golden locks. Edith was Talbot Harland's second or third cousin, we scarcely know which; but the foolish fellow did not care to avow the fact once to Dorinda, even when the latter noticed the smile of recognition that passed between them.

The appearance of the custodian's fair daughter gave a new turn to the Count de Bellegarde's meditations. Perhaps he thought she might assist the scheme he was forming in his breast. Perhaps he was merely struck by her beauty.

As he was the handsomest man in the room, he soon contrived to attract her attention; and when he got near enough to exchange a few words with her, he felt sure that he had produced the impression he desired.

We have said that the Count was irresistible. And he found it so in the present instance. The foolish little coquette felt sure she should see him again. Nor was she wrong.

Very little time, however, was allowed him to achieve this conquest. Almost immediately after Edith's appearance, the Duchess of Portsmouth lost her interest in the jewels. Her Grace had been delighted with old Edwards, but she could not endure his daughter, especially when Edith's golden tresses were admired by his Majesty.

She turned aside haughtily and contemptuously when the lovely lily-white hands proffered her a collar of gold with eighteen knots, set with seven fair diamonds and thirteen rubies, with thirteen pearl pendants, and would not look at it. She declared she had seen quite enough, and became impatient to depart. However, she had to await the Queen's pleasure; and her Majesty, who was attended by Sir Gilbert Talbot, had not quite finished her inspection. At last, the royal party quitted the jewel-room.

Talbot Harland lingered for a moment behind the others, and so did Bellegarde.

"How is my pretty cousin Edith?" asked Talbot.

"Your cousin!" exclaimed Bellegarde, surprised. "Faith! you have a most charming cousin!"

"I thought Mr. Talbot Harland had disclaimed our relationship," observed Edith. "He has never paid us a visit since we have been at the Tower. But we have heard that he makes a gay figure at Court."

"And you have heard the truth," said Bellegarde. "No one is in higher favour with the King than your cousin."

"But we have heard you were banished from Court," cried old Edwards. "I'm heartily glad to find the rumour incorrect."

"It was correct enough," observed Talbot. "I was banished for fighting a duel with this gentleman—the Count de Bellegarde. Happily, we have both been pardoned by his Majesty, and are now in as great favour as ever."

"Delighted to hear it," cried Edwards. "I am the Count's very humble servant."

"And I yours, sir," replied Bellegarde, bowing. "Pray present me to your fair daughter."

This was done, and the Count saluted her very respectfully. Talbot then interposed, and begged his kinsfolk to excuse them, as they must perforce follow their Majesties. Of course, Bellegarde was obliged to tear himself away, but he told Edith, in a whisper, that he hoped soon to behold her again.

While the inspection of the Crown jewels was going on, a collation had been prepared in the Lieutenant's lodgings, and to this the royal party now sat down.

After the repast, their Majesties returned by water to Whitehall.

V.

COLONEL BLOOD'S RETREAT IN WHITEFRIARS.

Ever since the attack upon the Duke of Ormond, Colonel Blood and his comrades had taken up their quarters in Whitefriars, in which sanctuary they could set the officers of justice at defiance.

Here we must seek them; and we shall find the Colonel and his trusty associates in a large, badly-furnished and gloomy-looking room on the ground-floor of an old crazy house that had served as a place of refuge to a succession of lawless characters.

This habitation chanced to be empty at the time, and so Blood took it, and it answered his present purpose well enough. We know not how many strange hiding-places and contrivances for escape it contained. There were

trapdoors in the floor, sliding panels in the wainscots, secret staircases, and vaults communicating with other vaults, so that the river could be reached. But the officers of justice were never allowed to set foot within the liberties of Whitefriars. The room, as we have said, in which Blood and his comrades sat, was large and gloomy. A wood-fire was burning on the hearth, and cast its light on the harsh features of the Colonel, which wore a very moody expression. He was thinking over the attack upon Ormond, and blaming himself for its ill-success. When he was in one of these sullen fits, his followers did not dare to disturb him, for his temper, at such times, was very savage. The flasks of wine on the table showed that the party had had a carouse. Mandeville was still drinking, while Montalt and Flooard were playing at piquette. Suddenly, Blood looked up, and called, in a gruff voice, for a cup of sack, which was given him.

"Newer was plan better contrived, nor more boldly executed," he muttered; "and yet it failed—failed utterly, through my own gross neglect! Curses upon the villain Ormond! To think that I had him in my power—that he was on the road to Tyburn, and that he should at last manage to escape! But I will hang him yet!"

"Think no more of him, Colonel," said Mandeville. "You know that our leader, Claude Duval, never approved of the scheme, and would take no part in it. He told us it would lead to mischievous consequences, and so it has."

"I should have been well content if I had avenged my friends," said Blood. "But I must wipe out my failure by some other daring exploit."

"Ay, that's the way to look at it, Colonel," cried Mandeville. "No use lamenting the past. Think of the present. Have you any fresh scheme to propose to us?"

"I have none," rejoined Blood, moodily.

"But I have," cried a well-known voice. "I have a magnificent scheme to propose to you."

Claude Duval stood before them.

He had come through a secret door, contrived in the wainscot near the chimney-piece. He was wrapped in a long black cloak, and carried a dark lantern in his hand. His appearance was hailed with the greatest satisfaction, all rising to welcome him except Blood.

Montalt assiduously helped him to take off his cloak, while Flooard relieved him of the

dark lantern. He then flung himself into a chair, and said,—

"Give me a cup of wine. I have been half-stifled in those confounded vaults. Pah! Now, then, you shall hear what I have to propose. Listen to me, I beg of you, Colonel. What I have to say will interest you. I have just parted with the Count de Bellegarde. He has been with their Majesties to the Tower."

"We passed the royal barge on its way thither," remarked Blood.

"You did wrong to venture so near it," said Duval; "you were noticed. But let me proceed. The Crown jewels, as you know, are deposited at the Tower, and the motive of his Majesty's visit was to show these treasures to the Duchess of Portsmouth. The Count saw them for the first time, and his description of them was enough to make one's mouth water. There are two crowns, and the precious stones with which they are garnished are beyond imagination and beyond all price. You will scarcely credit me, I daresay, when I tell you there is an emerald seven inches in circumference."

"A prodigious pebble!" exclaimed Blood, who was now all attention. "How I should like to handle it!"

"To pocket it, you mean, Colonel," remarked Montalt.

"To say nothing of rubies, pearls, and sapphires, any one of which would make a man wealthy," continued Duval. "The Count was quite bewildered by the sight."

"And well he might be," cried Blood. "I am bewildered by the mere idea. What more did he behold?"

"The two sceptres," replied Duval, "each of solid gold, and garnished with diamonds. The sceptre, with the dove, is three feet seven inches long, and three inches round; so you may guess its value."

"Magnificent! Don't you long to grasp it, Colonel?" remarked Montalt to Blood.

"I would grasp it like a monarch," rejoined the other.

"Then there was the orb!" pursued Duval. "A ball of solid gold, encircled by a golden fillet, embellished with roses of diamonds!"

"Hold!—hold!" exclaimed Blood, starting up. "I can bear no more! The description of these treasures excites me so strangely. For heaven! it were an enterprise worthy of us to seize upon them!"

"That were an enterprise, indeed!" cried Flodard.

"I was about to propose it to you," observed

Claude Duval. "The project is hazardous, and can only be accomplished by stratagem."

"By stratagem! Ha, that suits me!" cried Blood.

"The treasures are deposited in the Jewel Tower," pursued Duval; "and are entrusted to the sole care of an old Welshman, Talbot Edwards, who inhabits the tower with his wife and daughter. The latter is a pretty coquette, and the Count de Bellegarde has already made acquaintance with her."

"I see!" observed Blood. "Is there no guard outside the tower?"

"Yes; a sentinel is placed at the door. Old Edwards might easily be overpowered, of course, and the jewels secured, but the sentinel offers the first difficulty. Then there are the three gates of the fortress, each with its sentinel, besides the warders in the guard-chamber. All these have to be passed."

"Were the sentinels doubled, we would pass them!" cried Blood. "Even while you have been speaking, my teeming brain has produced a scheme that cannot fail. You will all have parts in it," he added, to his followers; "but the chief part will be enacted by myself. I shall go as a Welsh parson."

Shouts of laughter followed the announcement.

"As a Welsh parson!" exclaimed Duval. "Did I hear aright?"

"Laugh as much as you list," said Blood, maintaining a grave countenance amid the general merriment. "I shall put on canonicals. A cassock is as convenient as a domino. Clothed in a clerical garb, I shall be able to pass all the sentinels of the Tower without exciting suspicion. As a Welshman, old Edwards will hail, with delight the Reverend Llewellyn Price, and take him to his bosom. Besides, Parson Price will have his daughter Winefred with him. I'll speak to her at once." And striding towards a broad oaken staircase at the back, communicating with the upper rooms, he shouted out, with lusty lungs, "What ho, Sabine!"

"Coming, father," rejoined a musical voice from above.

VI.

SABINE DISAPPROVES OF HER FATHER'S PROJECT. PRESENTLY, a light appeared, and a graceful figure was seen descending the staircase.

Need we say it was the same fair creature who has appeared in sundry portions of our story as Violet Oldacre?

She set down her taper, and, with a cry of

delight, flew towards Duval; but he checked her by a slight gesture.

"You mistake me for the Count de Bellegarde," he said.

"Yes; I now see it is Captain Duval," she rejoined. "You called me, father."

"Ay; I have a great project to break to you," observed Blood.

"Always some new project, father."

"But this is greater than all the others. 'Twill make us rich beyond all computation. 'Twill enable you to live like a princess in France or Flanders. All your dreams of splendour will be realized."

"I fear these are but dreams in which you are indulging, father," observed Sabine, with a smile.

"You are an incredulous little fool," said Blood. "Ask Captain Duval if I have in the slightest degree exaggerated."

"Your father has not said a word too much," replied Duval. "'Tis a splendid scheme; and if crowned with success, will yield us millions."

"Millions!" exclaimed Sabine, surprised. "What can it be? Have you discovered the philosopher's stone?"

"Bah! All the disciples of Hermes could not produce such a heap of gold and precious stones as we have found out."

"And, pray, where is this wonderful treasure hidden?"

"In an enchanted castle," replied Duval; "defended by gates and drawbridges innumerable; surrounded by a double line of fortifications; locked up in a donjon; and watched by a jealous old dragon, whom it will be your business to put to sleep."

"Ah! you mean the Crown jewels," cried Sabine.

"You have guessed aright," said Blood. "Those jewels shall be ours ere many weeks are past. Now, was I wrong in styling the project a great one?"

"'Tis a dreadful project, father. I tremble to think of it."

"Pshaw!" returned the Colonel; "there is no more danger in it than in many a matter of trifling import."

"'Tis not the danger I think of, father, but the magnitude of the crime."

"Hard words, girl. But you need have no scruples. His Majesty will be able to replace his jewels; if not, it matters little. They are mere useless gewgaws where they now are kept. We will turn them to good account."

"But you do not expect me to take part in

such a scheme, father?" said Sabine. "I cannot do it."

Before Blood, who was getting angry, could reply, Duval arose, and approaching her, observed,—

"Did I not say, *mignonne*, that it would be your business to put to sleep the watchful dragon?"

"Do not impose such a hateful task upon me," she rejoined.

"Hateful, or not, you must perform it," cried her father, in a tone calculated to enforce obedience. "I require your assistance. To-morrow we shall go to the Tower together. In the interim, I will instruct you in the part you will have to play. It will not be difficult, I promise you."

While she remained silent and sad, Duval took Blood aside.

"His Majesty desires to see his nocturnal visitor again," he said.

"Ha!" exclaimed Blood.

"You may go to him without fear," pursued Duval.

"I will not go to him till this affair is over," said Blood. "Then I can act as circumstances may dictate. An interview with him at this juncture would interfere with the progress of our scheme—perhaps, thwart it altogether."

"Well, I will protest to him that I cannot find you. Have you heard aught from Buckingham?"

"Nothing; nor do I expect to hear from him. He will not trouble me."

"Be not too sure of that," returned Claude. "However, if you succeed in your design, you must take instant leave of England, and embark for France."

"I will neglect no precaution, rest assured," rejoined Blood.

"My mission is ended," said Duval. "Perchance I may meet Parson Price and his fair daughter at the Tower to-morrow; but if I do, we shall be strangers, of course."

He then turned to Sabine, who still looked downcast, and pressed her hand to his lips, as he bade her adieu.

"Excuse my hasty departure, sweetheart," he whispered. "There is a ball to-night at Whitehall, at which the Count de Bellegarde must be present."

She looked at him with tearful eyes, but made no remonstrance.

"Bon soir, *messieurs*!" he exclaimed. "*Empeignez le trésor, & voguez la galère!*"

Montalt helped him to put off his mantle, Flodard gave him the dark lantern, and both

bowed respectfully as he disappeared through the secret door.

VII.

PARSON PRICE AND HIS DAUGHTER.

NEXT morning, a wherry, which had come down the river from Whitefriars, and was rowed by four lusty young oarsmen, stopped at Tower Wharf, and landed a very stout ecclesiastic and his daughter.

Clergymen, we may state, in those days, always appeared in public in full canonicals—gown, cassock, and bands. Consequently, they were never taken for laymen.

Our stout parson had a jewal visage, and did not seem to have mortified the flesh with over severity. His loose robe gave additional width to shoulders already too broad. His gown was well kept, and his hands spotless. Though his features were harsh, his looks were not unprepossessing, and his manner was decorous and benign; so very benign, indeed, that when a warder approached, he seemed to pronounce an internal blessing upon the man.

Our parson's daughter was remarkably pretty, with magnificent black eyes, and rich black tresses. A graceful figure does not require the aid of dress to set it off; and her blue petticoat and red gown, of very plain material, suited her perfectly.

The pair we have described were gazing with wonder, not unmingled with awe, at the ancient fortress, when a big warder, with a bluff countenance, and a great C.R. embroidered in gold on his scarlet jerkin, who was lounging on the wharf, accosted them, and asked if he should show his reverence, and the young lady, the lions.

"You shall show me the way to the Jewel Tower, if it please you, my good friend," said the parson, bestowing the benediction upon him we have already recorded. "We are entire strangers here, as you may very well perceive."

"Ay, I can easily see that your reverence is from the country," returned the bluff-looking warder. "Many strangers visit the Tower. 'Tis the finest sight in all London."

"I should think so," cried the parson's daughter. "Dear! dear! what a wonderful place it is."

"Oh, you've seen nothing yet," cried the bluff warder. "Wait till you've seen the lions, and the bears. They'll astonish you, I'll warrant. You can hear 'em roaring now. The big white bear goes a-fishing every afternoon in the Thames."

"Does he, indeed?" said the parson's daughter, looking surprised.

"We do not desire to see lions and bears, my good friend," said the parson, blandly. "Our object is to proceed at once to the Jewel Tower, which is kept by our estimable relative, Mr. Talbot Edwards. You know him, perhaps?"

"Oh, yes, I know him, and a very worthy old gentleman he is,—a Welshman, and remarkably fond of toasted cheese," replied the warder.

"Toasted cheese is a very good thing, my friend, let me tell you. Perhaps you may have heard Mr. Edwards speak of the Reverend Llewellyn Price, of Caermarthon. I am Parson Price, and this is my daughter Winefred."

"I don't remember hearing Mr. Edwards mention your reverence," replied the bluff warder, somewhat abating his surliness. "But I am sure it will afford him pleasure to see you and your daughter, as it will me to conduct you to him."

"You are very obliging," said the assumed Parson Price. "May I ask your name, my good friend?"

"Dunstan—Kenelm Dunstan; known among my brother warders as Burly Dunstan," was the answer.

"A brave name! I shall not forget it. I am glad to know you, honest Kenelm—very glad indeed; and if it would not affront you, I would ask you to drink my health in a cup of mulled sack."

The burly warder, now entirely relaxed his previous bluntness, and smilingly accepted the piece of silver that Parson Price placed in his hand.

"I will drink your reverence's and the young lady's health in a cup of the best sack to be had at the Stone Kitchen," he said.

"I hope to find my cousin Edward in good health, Kenelm," pursued Parson Price; "I have not seen him for these many years. Can you tell me if he was in London when he obtained his appointment?"

"No, your reverence. He was residing at Llandaff, and very badly off, as I've heard. Sir Gilbert Talbot sent for him, and gave him the post."

"Ah! I knew the worthy gentleman had had misfortunes," remarked Parson Price, with a sigh; "but I thought he had left Llandaff long ago."

"You'll find him hale and hearty, sir," observed the warder; "and as to his daughter Edith, she will stand a comparison with your own fair young lady."

"You hear that, Winefred," said Parson Price, smiling. "Now, honest Kenelm, will you kindly show us the way?"

"That I will, your reverence."

The warder took them across the drawbridge, and then through the gateway of the By-ward Tower, near which several other burly individuals, like himself, in scarlet jerkins, embroidered with the royal badge, were assembled. All of them respectfully saluted the parson, who stopped to pronounce a benediction upon them.

"Be pleased to mention my name to your brother warders, Kenelm," said Parson Price. "As I shall often visit my cousin Edwards, it may be well they should know me."

"I will not fail," replied the warder.

As they went on, their conductor pointed out to them many objects of interest, and showed them the towers in which several prisoners of state were confined.

The sight of the sombre buildings and grated windows made Winefred turn pale. Her father did not seem so much impressed, but kept constantly asking questions about his cousin Edwards.

At length, they reached the Jewel Tower.

"Can I be of any further service to your reverence?" inquired the warder, about to take leave.

"Yes, my dear Kenelm; you will do me a particular favour if you will announce me to my cousin Edwards. I do not wish to take the old gentleman by surprise."

VIII.

PARSON PRICE AND HIS DAUGHTER ARE WELCOMED AT THE JEWEL TOWER.

THE warder went in, as requested, and presently returned, accompanied by old Mr. Edwards, who seemed scarcely to have recovered from the surprise into which he had been thrown.

Parson Price, however, stopped the old gentleman's mouth by pronouncing a blessing upon him and his family; and then, with a warmth of manner which there was no resisting, cried out,—

"Ah, my dear cousin, how glad I am to see you! I dare say you have quite forgotten Llewellyn Price of Cuermarthen; but, you see, he has not forgotten you."

Truth to say, Mr. Edwards did not recollect him in the least. Completely mystified, he knew not what reply to make.

After all, Welshmen have so many cousins, that the worthy man might have had one at

Cuermarthen without remembering the circumstance.

"No wonder you don't recollect me," continued Price. "I was but a boy when you saw me at Llandaff. This is my daughter Winefred. Her poor mother is buried at St. David's. She was a Griffith of Llandovery; but I can't trust myself to speak of her," he added with well-feigned emotion.

No need of more. Old Edwards was completely imposed upon by the respectable appearance of his new relations, and gave them a cordial welcome.

After saluting Winefred affectionately, he took them both into the tower, and presented them in due form to his wife and daughter.

Another scene had to be gone through, but it ended in all the cousins becoming mutually delighted with each other.

Parson Price soon established himself in Mrs. Edwards's good graces, and Edith was charmed with Winefred.

Cakes and metheglin were set before the visitors, and after they had partaken of the refreshments, old Edwards volunteered to show his cousins the Crown jewels.

He could not have made an offer more agreeable to Parson Price, who was enchanted to find himself in the treasure chamber.

How the parson's eyes glistened and his breast dilated as he gazed at the splendid show.

But while examining the various objects, he stole many a furtive glance round the chamber, noted every object within it, and saw where the old custodian's pistols and arquebuss were hung, secretly laughing at the precautions.

"Mine eyes never had such a feast before," he exclaimed as he relinquished the imperial crown to its guardian. "Lord! lord! how princes do bedeck themselves. Solomon in all his glory had not a crown like this. You must allow me another opportunity of inspecting these wondrous treasures, my dear cousin, for though I have seen much, I am not yet satisfied."

"You shall inspect them whenever you please," replied Edwards.

"I should like to come and see them every day during our stay in London," cried Winefred. "I never beheld anything so lovely. I wish I were a princess, to wear some of them."

"One gets tired of jewels as of everything else," remarked Edith. "I think nothing of them."

SABINE DEFEATS HER FATHER'S PRECAUTIONS. (See page 73.)



"Jewels, indeed, are but vanities!" exclaimed Parson Price.

"Don't say that, father," cried Winefred.

"You might as well say that all earthly treasures are but dross."

"And so they are, my dear," rejoined the parson. "Mere dross."

"I wish I had a little more of the dross,"

observed Edwards.

"Jewels would be very well, if one could wear them," remarked Edith. "But merely to gaze at them in this way becomes tiresome. How well you would look in this collar, my pretty cousin," she added, fastening a necklace set with diamonds and pearls round Winefred's fair throat.

"And in this regal ornament," said Mrs. Edwards, placing a circlet adorned with balass rubies, table diamonds, and emeralds on her brows.

"There! doesn't she look charming?" cried Edith, clapping her hands with delight.

"Charming, indeed!" echoed Mr. Edwards.

"Take them off, my child," said Parson Price. "Your foolish head will be turned."

"Let her keep them on for a few minutes," interposed Edwards. "They suit her remarkably well."

"Ay, but they fill her mind with pride."

"Nonsense, father. You are always preaching to me. I like the sensation of wearing them immensely."

"Is it thousand pities there is no one to see you in them besides ourselves, cousin," cried Edith.

Scarcely was utterance given to the wish, than the door opened, and the Count de Bellegarde stood before them.

IX.

WINEFRED BECOMES JEALOUS OF EDITH.

He seemed charmed by the picture presented to his gaze.

"Trying the effect of the jewels, eh?" he exclaimed. "May I be permitted to assist at the experiment?"

"Certainly," replied Edith, laughing. "'Tis the Comte de Bellegarde, father," she added, in a whisper.

Then, turning to the Count, she explained that they were exhibiting the treasures to their Welsh cousins.

Bellegarde begged to be presented to the cousins, and quite captivated Parson Price by his politeness and affability.

"What a charming man!" whispered the parson to Edwards.

"Belongs to the Court; came here yesterday with their Majesties," replied the other, in a low tone.

"Seems to be struck with your daughter," remarked the parson. "No wonder. She is a great beauty."

A further essay was now made at the Count's request, and this time a gold collar set with three sapphires, and having ten knots of round pearls, was linked round Edith's snowy neck, while her golden tresses were crowned by another jewelled circlet.

Thus adorned, she looked surpassingly beautiful, and the Count's admiration was so ardently expressed, that it excited a pang of jealousy in Winefred's bosom.

The feeling was heightened by the undisguised delight with which his praises were received by Edith.

The vain little coquette was so much flattered, that she was quite willing to try on some other ornaments.

"What's the matter, my child?" cried Parson Price, noticing his daughter's agitation.

"I don't know, father," she replied; "but I feel rather faint. I think I had better leave the room."

In an instant all was confusion. Totally unsuspecting of the truth, Edith hastily laid down the jewels she was about to try on, and flew to her cousin, who looked excessively pale, and ready to drop, and, with Mrs. Edwards's assistance, helped her out of the room.

Both Bellegarde and the old custodian expressed their concern to Parson Price, but he treated the matter very lightly.

"A mere passing indisposition," he said. "She will be quite well anon."

However, the Count de Bellegarde, who quite understood what was the matter with her, and feared that the success of the scheme might be jeopardized by some *contretemps*, thought it prudent to take his departure. Accordingly, he made his bow to the old custodian, promising to pay him another visit ere long.

A glance from Parson Price showed that he entirely approved of this step.

Just as Bellegarde was leaving, he met Edith, coming out of the lower chamber.

"Are you going, Count?" she exclaimed, with a look of disappointment. "My poor cousin Winefred has frightened you away. She is better now. Am I ever to see you again?"

"You will certainly see me when I am next at the Tower."

"And when is that likely to be?"

"Not just yet. I should alarm your father if I appeared again too soon."

"You need not come to the Jewel Tower. I always take an evening walk on the ramparts."

"Then I may possibly find you there to-morrow evening. Adieu!"

Scarcely was he gone, when the old custodian and Parson Price issued from the jewel-chamber. Having carefully locked the door, Edwards thrust the key into his girdle.

"Are you never afraid of being robbed, my dear cousin?" asked the parson, innocently.

"No," replied Edwards. "He must be a bold man and a cunning, who would attempt to plunder the Jewel Tower."

Parson Price smiled to himself at the remark.

The parson and his daughter did not stay much longer, though pressed to do so by their hospitable relatives; but Price promised his cousin Edwards to come again next day, and bring with him two young gentlemen from Carmarthen.

"One of them," he added, in a whisper, "is engaged to Winefred, but the other would be eligible as a suitor to Edith."

Edith and her mother accompanied their newly-found relatives to the Tower Wharf, where the latter took a boat to the Temple Stairs, their belongings being in the Strand.

But the silly coquette made her cousin perfectly wretched by confining to her, as they proceeded to the place of embarkation, that she was about to meet the gallant Count de Bellegarde on the ramparts on the following evening.

Poor Winefred felt again ready to drop.

X.

JENKIN PUGH AND CADWALLADER GRIFFITH.

PARSON PRICE was not long in paying another visit to his dear cousins at the Jewel Tower.

Next afternoon, he appeared again, and brought with him, according to his promise, two good-looking young gallants, whom he introduced as Jenkin Pugh and Cadwallader Griffith—both of Carmarthen.

Jenkin, he privately informed the old couple, was engaged to Winefred; but Cadwallader was on his preferment, and being, as they saw, tall and proper, with two or three hundred a-year in land at Abergwilly, in Caermarthenshire, and owner, moreover, of Merlin's Cave, he would make a very suitable match, he thought, for Edith.

This information produced the desired effect on the old custodian and his wife, especially when they perceived that the inflammable young Welshman was struck at once by the charms of their golden-haired daughter, and did not attempt to disguise his feelings, but paid her most assiduous attention. He met with no discouragement from Edith, who had heard from her mother of the three hundred a-year in land and Merlin's Cave.

Cadwallader, we may mention, was no other than Montalt, while Jenkin bore a strong resemblance to a certain Flodoard. Both were very gaily attired.

Further to propitiate the ladies of the Jewel Tower, Parson Price had brought them some little presents—a few pairs of gloves, and some perfumes for Edith, with a partlet and hood for her mother.

Naturally, they both expressed great regret that Winefred had been left behind; but Parson Price explained that his daughter was not very strong, and needed repose. She would come on some early day.

Everything went on prosperously. Neither of the young gallants were in the slightest degree bashful, but rattled away gaily, and seemed to know a good deal about town life. Now and then a glance from the parson checked them, when they were displaying rather too intimate an acquaintance with the gaming tables.

As a matter of course, they were shown the Crown jewels, and while enjoying the exhibition, they cautiously examined the chamber, as their leader had done on the previous day.

It was here that Cadwallader seized the opportunity of describing Merlin's Cave.

"Merlin, as you are aware," he said, "was a great enchanter, and performed his incantations in that wonderful cave; which now belongs to me. In fact, I have reason to believe that I am a descendant of the renowned magician."

"We should never take you for a conjuror, my dear Cad," remarked Parson Price, good-humouredly. "What has Merlin's Cave got to do with these jewels?"

"A great deal, as you shall hear, sir," replied Cadwallader. "Tis said, and I devoutly believe the legend, that countless treasures were buried in that cave by Merlin—great chests of gold, blood-red rubies of enormous size, diamonds that would outshine the stars, and emeralds to which that in the Crown of State would be a tiny pebble. All these treasures,

the legend says, are buried in the cave, and guarded by a potent spell, and unless that spell can be broken they will never be discovered. I have tried 'Abracadabra,' and all kinds of magical words, but have not succeeded. Still, I do not despair. They say the spell can only be dissolved by a virgin with a skin as white as snow, and looks glowing like gold—But then she must be a native of Wales."

"Bless me!" exclaimed Edith, "that seems to answer to my description. I won't say anything about my complexion, but my tresses——"

"Are as bright as gold," interrupted Cadwallader, gallantly. "You have all the requisite qualifications. Clearly, you are the virgin who could break the spell, and bring to light the treasure that has been hidden for centuries."

"I should like to try," she cried.

"You *shall* try," exclaimed Cadwallader, with a fervour that almost amounted to a declaration, and made Edith blush and cast down her eyes.

Parson Price chuckled internally, and old Edwards winked at his wife, who looked very well pleased.

From this moment, the young Welshman's suit made very rapid progress. In some cases, the first step is the only difficulty. Edith was so dazzled by the idea of Merlin's Cave, that she could think of nothing else.

No wonder, after such an auspicious commencement, that the old custodian would not hear of parting with his guests, but insisted on their staying supper. As an inducement he promised them a dish of toasted cheese, cooked in the true Welsh style, and this they could not resist.

Edith had not forgotten her appointment with the Count de Bellegarde, but she felt it would now be difficult to keep it. However, when evening came on, she contrived to escape from the company, and unlocking a small door at the back of the tower, communicating with the outer ward, speedily gained the ramparts. A sentinel was pacing to and fro. The Count was true to his appointment. Perceiving him at a little distance, she flew towards him, and told him hurriedly that their interview must be very brief.

"I would not seek to detain you, were you able to stay," replied the Count. "We are watched."

"Watched! by whom?" cried Edith. "My

father and mother are in-doors with their guests. I have just left them."

"Look there!" replied the Count, drawing her attention to a female figure standing near the bastion at the north-east angle of the walls. "She is watching us."

"Can it be my cousin Winefred? I was foolish enough to tell her of my appointment with you this evening."

"'Tis she," replied Bellegarde.

"There is nothing to fear from her," said Edith.

"What is she doing here, unless she means mischief?"

"Very true," responded Edith. "We must not meet again, Count. I haven't time to explain, but circumstances have occurred——"

"You have found a new lover—that's it. What key is that?" he added, noticing that she had one in her hand.

"This key enabled me to get out of the Jewel Tower unperceived," she replied, with an arch smile.

"It would enable me to get in in the same way. Lend it me."

"Not for worlds," she replied. "My father would never forgive me if he knew I had taken it."

Bidding him a hasty adieu, Edith now tripped off; and almost at the same moment, the female figure that had remained stationary near the bastion disappeared.

No remark was made on Edith's brief absence, and soon afterwards a plentiful supper was served.

Before they sat down to it, Parson Price did not neglect to say grace. With the promised toasted cheese, which proved to be excellent, and was greatly enjoyed by all the guests, a black jack filled with potent Welsh ale was sent round. The parson took a hearty pull at it.

They were in the midst of their enjoyment—Parson Price was chatting merrily with Mrs. Edwards, and Cadwallader was whispering soft words to Edith,—when a female servant entered, and delivered a little note to her master.

"What can it mean?" cried the old custodian, glancing at the letter.

"Let me look at it, father," cried Edith, who was not without some uneasiness on her own account.

Snatching the letter from him, she opened it, and cast a hasty glance at its contents.

"What is it?" demanded Edwards.

"A warning to you, father," she replied.

"A warning! Let me hear it."

The parson and his associates exchanged covert looks.

They were not left long in suspense, for Edith read the letter aloud. It ran as follows:—

"A plot has been formed against you. Beware, or you will lose that which you value more than life."

"This, from a friend."

"Who could plot against me?" cried Edwards, with a look of consternation that was reflected on his wife's countenance.

"Who, indeed, my dear cousin?" cried Parson Price, scarcely able to conceal his uneasiness. "You don't suspect me?"

"No, no, no!" cried the old custodian. "I suspect nobody. I don't know what to think. What I value more than life must be——"

"Your daughter, of course, sir," interposed Cadwallader.

"No—my jewels," cried the old man. "I would die twenty deaths rather than lose them."

"Don't make yourself uneasy, father," said Edith. "I can explain the meaning of the letter. It refers to me. The writer fancies you love me better than your treasures, and that it would break your heart to lose me."

"I hope your worthy father does not mean to keep you for ever," cried Cadwallader. "If so, I unhesitatingly announce my intention of robbing him. All the locks and bolts he can place on the doors of this tower shall not deter me from making the attempt."

General laughter followed this speech, the boldness of which did not displease the old custodian, who had been reassured by his daughter's observations. He felt she had something to explain, but this was not the time to ask for further explanation.

Parson Price saw that the danger was past, and, though secretly enraged by the incident, maintained a semblance of good humour. Cadwallader continued his addresses to Edith.

Muddled sack was introduced by Mrs. Edwards, and the rest of the evening passed away merrily.

Good hours are kept at the Tower, and the tattoo of a drum informed the guests it was time to depart.

While Parson Price was taking leave of his host, he observed, in a whisper, "Take my advice, my dear cousin; strike while the iron is hot. If you are satisfied with the suitor I

have found for your daughter, don't let him slip through your fingers."

Old Edwards incontinently acted on the hint, and the parson and his young friends were asked to come again on the morrow.

XI.

WHAT PASSED BETWEEN WINEFRED AND TALBOT HARLAND.

THE person who had delivered the letter of which mention has just been made, was the warder Kenelm. He was standing beneath the trees that skirted the parade, with some of his companions, when a young damsel, whom he at once recognised as Parson Price's lovely daughter Winefred, came up to him, and begged him to take a letter for her to the Jewel Tower, giving him a *douceur* at the same time.

Though rather surprised, the warder asked no questions, but went immediately on the errand.

Winefred was hastening towards the gateway of the Bloody Tower, when she heard quick footsteps behind her, and, turning at the sound, beheld Talbot Harland. The young man had been dining with his uncle, Sir Gilbert Talbot, who had lodgings in the Tower; and, having seen the young damsel give the letter to the warder, had followed her. He knew her only as Farmer Oldacre's daughter Violet, and there was a mystery about her and her proceedings that excited his curiosity.

"Give you good e'en, fair damsel," he cried. "I am glad to see you again—but I did not expect to find you here."

"Do not detain me, sir," she rejoined. "My business here is done, and I am anxious to get away."

"One moment, and you shall go. 'Tis strange I should meet you. Miss Neville caught sight of you the other day on the river, and has spoken of you frequently since. She was in the royal barge."

"I saw her."

"She takes much interest in you, and will be pleased to hear of you. Have you any message for her?"

"None," she replied, with a troubled look. "She had better think no more of me. I am unworthy of her regard."

"I will not tell her what you say, for I do not believe it. Sit down for a moment on this bench. You seem agitated."

The young damsel felt so faint, that she was forced to comply. Talbot sat down beside her. For a brief space, not a word was said.

"I should like to see Miss Neville once

more," said the young dame, breaking the silence. "I am in a most difficult position, and know not how to act for the best. She might advise me. I have no other friend on earth."

"Not your father?" cried Talbot.

"I cannot consult him," she rejoined. "I have something to reveal to Miss Neville—something strange—something terrible. But I must see her without delay, or it will be too late to prevent the mischief."

"Come, then, to Whitehall to-morrow morning. You will easily find her apartments. They are in the gallery assigned to the Queen's Maids of Honour. I will prepare her for the interview."

"I will come, if I can. Should I be prevented, and ought happen, entreat her to judge me as kindly as she can."

"Why not impart the secret to me? I swear to you I will keep it."

"It concerns others besides myself—others whom I will never betray. I will confide it only to Dorinda Neville."

Suddenly she started to her feet.

She had descried the Count de Bellegarde coming towards them along the parade, and without another word, hurried down to the gloomy archway, and disappeared.

"I hope I have not interrupted a *tête-à-tête*," exclaimed the Count, as he came up.

"You have prevented me from learning a secret, Count, that is all," replied Talbot.

"A secret!—that's a pity! One comes to the Tower to learn State secrets."

"That was your own errand, I suppose, Count?"

"Yes; and I have learnt two or three important secrets since I have been here—secrets worth knowing, I can promise you. Are you for Whitehall? or do you mean to sleep at the Tower?"

"I am with you," replied Talbot.

And they quitted the fortress together.

An hour later, Parson Price and his companions took boat at the Tower Wharf, and proceeded to Whitefriars. As they passed the guard-chamber, the parson perceived Kenelm, and stopping for a moment to chat with him, learnt that his daughter had been at the Tower that evening.

Concealing his anger, the parson merely observed, "She was too unwell to join the party at the Jewel Tower, so she wrote an excuse to my cousin Edwards."

"Yes; I took the letter," replied the warder; "and I remarked that the young lady looked unwell."

"She has endeavoured to betray us," mentally ejaculated the parson, as he walked on. "Luckily, the design has failed. I will take good care she shall make no more mischief."

XII.

SABINE THREATENS TO REVEAL THE SCHEME.

SABINE was alone in the large, gloomy room of the old house at Whitefriars.

She was seated near the table, on which a lamp was placed, and her looks betokened the greatest mental distress. Rousing herself, at last, she took up the light, and was about to proceed to her own chamber, when her father and his companions entered from the outer door. Mandeville also was with them.

Blood had already disencumbered himself of his gown and cassoct; he flung them down on a chair as he came in. His infuriated looks terrified Sabine, and she would have escaped; but he roughly seized her arm, and dragged her back.

"Traitor!" he exclaimed, fiercely. "What fiend prompted you, to this insane act? 'Tis not your fault that I and my comrades are not now laden with fetters in the dungeons of the Tower. What led you to betray us? Speak!"

"I only wished to put the good old man on his guard, father."

"And, by so doing, jeopardize my life. Unnatural girl! Had you succeeded in rousing the old man's suspicions, all had been over with me and my comrades, and the grandest scheme ever planned would have been unmasked. I hoped it had been some wild impulse to which you had yielded, without thought of the consequences; but I find it was a deliberate act. Truly, I have nourished a serpent in my bosom, to sting me."

"Never, till now, have I been disobedient to you, father. I have taken part—reluctantly enough, as you know—in numberless schemes in which you have engaged; but this is a crime so monstrous, that my soul revolts against it. When I saw that good old man, my heart was suddenly changed. He will die, if you deprive him of his treasures."

"What are the treasures to him?" cried Blood, contemptuously. "I will make him richer than he has ever yet been in his life."

"And I intend to wed his daughter Edith," observed Mandeville. "She is a wonderfully fine girl, and will just suit me. The old gentleman and his wife shall live with us at the Hague."

"You judge him by yourselves," cried the

time. "He will never survive the blow you are about to inflict upon him. May heaven avert it!"

At this moment the secret door near the chimney-piece flew open, and Claude Duval stepped forth.

A glance at the group told him what was passing.

Quitting Sabine, Blood took him aside, and they conferred together for a few minutes, in a low tone. During this interval Sabine watched them anxiously. At last Duval stepped towards her.

"I see you are angry with me," she said, in a deprecatory tone. "But I could not help what I have done. I would save my father from a great crime."

"You have been suddenly conscience-stricken, it appears," observed Duval, coldly. "But why make Talbot Harland your father-confessor?"

"I have told him nothing, as yet; but I will disclose all, unless the scheme is abandoned."

A peculiar smile played upon Duval's features.

"Your candour is charming," he cried. "You shall tell him whatever you please, if you can find an opportunity of conversing with him again."

"Then you mean to keep me a prisoner here?" she exclaimed.

"Your father will take such steps as he may deem consistent with his safety," observed Duval.

"Well, I will do my best to elude his vigilance."

"Then you are resolved to betray us? Say so frankly. You will not greatly alarm me."

"I will not betray you. But take care you do not betray yourself. Do not go to the Tower again."

"Hum!" muttered Duval, as if struck by the counsel. "That may not be bad advice, after all."

He then rejoined Blood, who was standing at a little distance, watching them, and said, in a low tone, "She is determined to thwart our project. Nothing I can say will turn her from her purpose. Keep her a close prisoner till the affair is accomplished."

"It shall be done," replied Blood. "I would send her on board the schooner I have hired, but the skipper won't be ready till to-morrow."

"She will be far safer here," said Duval.

"But let her be carefully watched. She has told me she will escape if she can."

"What the plague can have taken possession of her?" muttered Blood. "She has never be-

fore turned rebellious, and now she falls from me at the most important crisis of my life."

"'Tis well she has not done more mischief," said Duval. "But Talbot Harland's suspicions may be aroused by what she has said to him, and some slight circumstance may lead to the discovery of the design. Are your preparations sufficiently made to enable you to strike the blow at once?"

"I would rather delay it for a few days."

"The delay will be fraught with danger. You cannot improve your position with the old custodian and his family. You have gained their confidence, and may lose it by some inadvertence. You have had a narrow escape to-day. Who knows what may happen to-morrow?"

"Ay, who knows?" echoed Blood. "But by to-morrow night, I trust, I shall have got possession of the jewels, for I will strike the blow, prepared or not prepared."

"Well resolved," cried Duval. "You do not require further aid from me. I do not wish to be mixed up with the enterprise."

"You have done quite enough," said Blood. "Leave all the rest to me. I am not sorry you have forced me to take immediate action, for this important affair has been weighing heavily on my mind."

"One last word of advice. Take good care of Sabine. She is your chief danger."

"Have no fear of her. She shall not leave this place of refuge till the affair is over, and I can take her with me, on board the schooner. Then ho! for Holland!"

"For Holland ho! where we shall next meet," rejoined Duval.

All this time Sabine had been watching him, and seeing he was departing, without bidding her adieu, she rushed towards him, and flung herself into his arms.

"Have you no longer any love for me?" she cried, passionately.

"I love you better than life."

"Prove it, by abandoning this scheme."

"You must talk to your father, sweetheart. All rests now with him. I have nothing more to do with it. Take her, sir."

And disengaging himself gently from her embrace, he consigned her to Blood, and passed through the secret door.

XIII.

SABINE ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE.

"Now, father, I must have a word with you," said Sabine.

"I will have no further conversation with you to-night," he rejoined, sternly. "You

RIFFING THE JEWEL CHAMBER. (See page 73)



"have displeased me greatly. Take your supper instantly, and get to your chamber."

"I do not require supper."

"As you please. But mark what I say!" he cried, with increasing sternness. "You will not leave your chamber till to-morrow night!"

"Not till to-morrow night?"

"Perhaps, not then! So take with you all you need."

"I want nothing!" she rejoined.

"Nonsense! I shall not allow you to starve yourself. Put up some catables and a flask of wine in a basket," he said to Flodoard.

The order was promptly obeyed by the young man, who placed a cold fowl, bread, and some other matters in a basket, which he gave to his leader.

"Anything more?" asked Flodoard.

"Have you enough?" demanded Blood.

"More than enough," she rejoined.

"Come, then, to your chamber," he cried, mounting the staircase, which creaked beneath his heavy footsteps.

Sabine's bed-chamber was the best in the house, but little could be said in its praise. It was large, low-roofed, sombre, and scantily furnished. Setting down the basket of provisions on the table, her father said,—

"You have to thank yourself that you will be kept a prisoner here. Good night."

Casting a hasty glance round the room, he then went out, locked the door carefully, and took away the key.

Sabine smiled at this precaution, knowing that she could easily defeat it.

The house, as we have said, was full of strange contrivances, and this room had a secret outlet, which she had discovered.

Her father had not been gone more than half an hour when she ventured forth, and crept stealthily to the head of the staircase.

But it was impossible to descend it unperceived. Blood and his comrades were carousing, and it would seem from their talk that they had no immediate intention of retiring to rest. She therefore returned to her own room.

An hour later she made a second attempt. The sounds of revelry were not so loud as they had previously been, but she heard her father's deep voice as he gave instructions to the others.

"Besides the other articles I have specified," he said, "we shall need a pallet and a file and a couple of large bags, such as lawyers are wont to carry."

"A pallet is an awkward implement to

hide," remarked Montalt, "and not the sort of thing that a gentleman usually carries about with him. Cannot we dispense with it?"

"Impossible! You will find out its use to-morrow."

"I am to remain with the horses at the foot of Tower Hill. Is it not so, Colonel?" demanded Mandeville.

"Ay," replied Blood. "I hope we may be able to embark quietly with the booty at the Tower Wharf, and go on board the schooner; but, in the event of alarm, we must ride off in different directions."

Sabine heard no more. Returning to her room, she remained there for another hour, when she ventured forth again.

Finding all still below, she took a few cautious steps down the staircase.

The lamp wanted trimming, but dim as it was, it showed plainly enough that the whole party were fast asleep. Her father was slumbering in the arm-chair, and breathing deeply.

She continued to descend slowly; but, in spite of her care, the stairs creaked, and Blood, who was easily aroused started up.

"Who's that?" he vociferated, fancying he saw some one dart up-stairs.

"What's the matter, Colonel?" cried Montalt, wakening up, and rubbing his eyes.

"Methought I saw Sabine on the stairs," rejoined Blood; "but that's impossible. I have the key of her door in my pocket. However, I'll satisfy myself at once."

Snatching up the lamp, he hurried up-stairs. Sabine's door was fastened preciously as he had left it. He listened for a moment, but could hear no sound within.

He did not unlock the door, but rapped sharply against it with his knuckles. His daughter immediately called out, and on hearing her voice, he felt sure all was right, and went back tranquilly.

Sabine made no further attempt to escape, but waited patiently till morning.

XIV.

SABINE HAS AN AUDIENCE OF THE KING.

WHEN morn came, Sabine thought she should have a visit from her father, nor was she mistaken. He brought her some breakfast; but observing that she had not touched the viands that he had laid on the table overnight, he said, with a sneer,—

"Soh, you are resolved to fast, I perceive. I did not enjoin the penance; but since you are practising it, I may remark that a little mortification of the body will do you good, and

"make you more obedient. I am sorry to deal harshly with you, Sabine," he added, somewhat softening his tone; "but you compel me to do so. You will remain here a prisoner during the day; but at night I will send Mandeville for you, or come myself. Have you aught to say to me?"

"Only to implore you to abandon this wicked design, father."

"No more of this," he cried, impatiently; "or you will rekindle my anger against you."

"Perhaps we may never meet again, father," pleaded Sabine.

"Tut! tut! we shall meet again ere many hours, and then you will talk to me in a very different strain. Farewell!"

"Farewell for ever, father!"

Blood looked at her for a moment, as if struggling with conflicting feelings. But his heart was hardened. Dashing out of the room, he locked the door outside, and took the key with him as before.

Sabine ventured forth every now and then, but her patience was most severely tried; for it was not till near eleven o'clock that she became convinced that the whole party were gone.

She had already made such changes in her attire as would enable her to present herself fittingly to Dorinda. Consequently there was nothing now to detain her; but the outer door having been locked by Blood, she was obliged to make her exit through the sliding panel near the chimney-piece, and thread the vaulted labyrinth so frequently tracked by Duval.

This brought her eventually to the river-side, where she quickly hired a wherry, and was conveyed in it to Whitehall stairs. Her features being concealed by a hood, she did not fear recognition or molestation.

She found her way without difficulty, though not without some delay, to Dorinda's apartments in the palace. A page, who was in attendance in the gallery appropriated to the Maids of Honour, conducted her to them. She was admitted at once, for Dorinda was expecting her.

Though she had resolved to make a full disclosure of the scheme, Sabine was at first so much agitated that she could scarcely speak; but when she had in some degree recovered her composure, the details she entered into filled her hearer with astonishment and alarm.

Dorinda saw at once the imminence of the peril. But what was to be done? After a moment's reflection, she summoned the page, and dispatched him at once with a message to

the King, beseeching his Majesty to grant her an immediate audience on a matter of the utmost import.

"You must accompany me to the King, and tell him all," she said to Sabine.

The unhappy damsel had now become so much terrified, that she would have retreated had it been possible; but Dorinda strove to reassure her by representing that she had a paramount duty to perform, before which every other consideration must give way. She was still employing these arguments, though with indifferent success, when Talbot Harland presented himself.

On seeing him, Sabine immediately sprang to her feet, and with an energy that startled both him and Dorinda, cried, "Go to the Tower at once. You may yet be in time. Go to the Jewel Tower, and remain there. Do not ask for any explanation. Go at once."

"Is this madness?" demanded Talbot, gazing at Dorinda.

"No," she replied, with an earnestness that carried conviction with it. "Do her bidding. She has good reason for giving you the order. A daring attempt is about to be made to carry off the Crown jewels."

"There is yet time to prevent it," cried Sabine.

"Heaven grant I may not be too late!" cried Talbot, appalled by the magnitude of the danger.

Scarcely knowing how he got there, he found himself in another minute at the palace stairs; and springing into a four-wheeled wherry, ordered the watermen to row to the Tower.

"Row for our lives!" he repeated. "'Tis his Majesty's business."

The oars were instantly plunged into the stream, and the boat shot off like an arrow from a bow. Luckily, the tide was running swiftly down.

Shortly after Talbot's departure, the page returned, accompanied by Chiffinch, who brought a very gracious response from his Majesty.

The two damsels were then conducted by the confidential valet through a private passage to the King's apartments.

Charles was in his cabinet, seated in an easy chair, and ruminating upon various matters—his sole companions being some half-dozen long-eared spaniels. He was just setting out to the tennis-court, when Dorinda's message stopped him, for he was too good-natured to refuse her the audience she requested.

Nothing could equal his surprise when she

was ushered into his presence, accompanied by Sabine. He immediately rose to receive them, and prevented them from making the profound reverence they contemplated.

Chiffinch, the discreet, having performed his office, immediately retired.

"I fancy you have some favour to ask of me in behalf of this fair damsel," he said, glancing at Sabine, who remained timidly in the background. "Do not hesitate to prefer it. 'Tis granted ere asked."

"'Tis not a favour she solicits, sire," replied Dorinda. "She has a most important disclosure to make to your Majesty."

"Ah, sire," exclaimed Sabine, rushing forward, and throwing herself at the King's feet; "your Majesty has seen through my heart. I have—indeed, indeed, a great boon to ask of you."

"In return for the revelation you are about to make? Ha!" cried Charles. "Well, name the boon?"

"I ask my father's life, which he has most justly forfeited to your Majesty," she cried. "I have betrayed him, and if he is put to death, I shall die, too. I would give my life to purchase his pardon."

"What has your father done?" demanded Charles, gravely. "Before I can hold out any hope of pardon, I must learn the crime he has committed."

"My liege, I tremble to inform you that he has conceived the design of carrying off the Crown jewels from the Tower; but I trust his scheme will prove abortive."

"Talbot Harland is already gone to the Tower, sire, and will take such steps as may be needful," interposed Dorinda.

"Oddsfish!" exclaimed the King. "This is, indeed, a formidable design, and the contriver of it can scarce pass unpunished."

"The scheme would infallibly have succeeded, sire, had I not felt bound to reveal it," said Sabine.

"But why defer the disclosure to the latest moment, so as to give the project a chance of success?" demanded the King.

"I have been kept a close prisoner till within these two hours, my liege, and prevented from holding communication with any one. On making my escape, I flew to Miss Neville, and gave her information of the plot."

"Arise!" exclaimed Charles.

"I will not rise, sire, till you promise me my father's life. I care not what punishment you inflict on me, but spare him."

"You shall be rewarded rather than pun-

ished, fair damsel," said the King, raising her gently.

"Reward me by the boon I have asked, sire," she rejoined. "I will accept no other recompense."

Charles made no reply, but stepping towards a table, struck a small silver bell.

At the summons, Chiffinch instantly appeared.

"Bid Lord Feversham repair, with the utmost despatch, to the Tower," he said.

"Any further orders, sire?"

"None. His lordship will learn what he has to do when he arrives there. Stay! Is the Count de Bellegarde in the palace?"

"He is, sire—playing ombre in the Stone Gallery."

"Bid him come to me at once."

Charles watched the effect of this injunction upon Sabine, and perceived that she looked troubled.

"I shall learn something by confronting them together," he thought.

"You have not told me your father's real name?" he added to Sabine. "Disguise nothing, if you would serve him."

"My father is Colonel Blood, of Sarney, in the county of Meath," she replied.

"An arch rebel, and contriver of a plot to seize on Dublin Castle—I remember," observed the King. "When I first saw you, you were called Violet Oldacre."

"My real name is Sabine Blood, sire," she rejoined.

"I do not wish to put many interrogations to you now. But has your father many accomplices?"

"Three, my liege. They are all with him."

"All three?"

"All three, sire."

At this juncture, Bellegarde was ushered in. Whatever might be his secret emotions on beholding Sabine, the Count betrayed no discomposure.

"Your Majesty has sent for me," he said, bowing profoundly.

"I have some questions to ask you. Are you acquainted with Colonel Blood?"

"I have seen him occasionally at the gaming-houses, sire; but I have no particular acquaintance with him."

"You know his daughter Sabine?"

"Is this the young lady, sire? I fancy I have seen her before, but I fail to recall the precise circumstances under which the meeting occurred."

"Will you allow your lover to disown you thus?" observed the King.

"The Count de Bellegarde is not my lover, sire," cried Sabine, with well-feigned indignation. "I know nothing of him."

"Pray mark that, my liege!" cried the Count. "The fair damsel disclaims all knowledge of me. May I venture to ask the object of these questions?"

"You will learn anon. I have not yet finished. Have you seen Colonel Blood of late?"

"Not for several months, sire."

"Think again. He was at Newmarket."

"He might be, and yet escape my notice."

"Will it surprise you to learn that he has formed a daring plan to carry off the Crown jewels?"

"It surprises me beyond measure," cried the Count, affecting extreme astonishment. "But I rejoice that your Majesty has discovered and defeated his design."

"I trust it has been defeated," said the King. "But I am still in uncertainty."

"Ere this, Talbot Harland must have reached the Tower," said Dorinda. "And your Majesty may be sure he will send you instant intelligence."

"But some little time must needs elapse—Ha!"

The exclamation was caused by the sound of a cannon, that shook the room.

"'Tis one of the heavy Tower guns!" cried the King. "Why is it fired?"

"Can your Majesty ask?" exclaimed Dorinda, unable to repress her exultation. "'Tis a signal from Talbot Harland—a signal of success!"

"Heaven preserve my father in this dire extremity!—and pardon me!" murmured Sabine.

Bellegarde became very pale, but gave no other evidence of emotion. Sabine did not dare to look at him.

The King had been listening for another discharge, but none was heard.

"I trust that cannon announced the capture of the daring villain and his associates," he exclaimed. "At any rate, the alarm has been given."

Sabine could not repress a slight cry, and seemed ready to sink.

Touched by her condition, the King said to Dorinda, "Give this unhappy damsel an asylum till I receive further intelligence. I shall then know what to do."

"I will take every care of her, my liege," replied Dorinda, quitting the cabinet with Sabine.

"Hark ye, Count," said the King, drily, as the others were alone. "I believe all you have told me respecting Colonel Blood; but if

you have any apprehension of being implicated in his scheme, you had better decamp."

"Decamp, sire! I should be the last man to decamp. Your Majesty wrongs me by these suspicions. If Colonel Blood has been captured—as I trust will prove to be the case—interrogate him; and if he charges me with aiding him in his audacious project, inflict upon me the severest punishment you can devise. With your Majesty's permission, I shall not quit Whitehall."

Bowing profoundly, he withdrew.

XV.

HOW BLOOD'S SCHEME PROSPERED.

WE must now return to Parson Price and his young friends, Cadwallader Griffith and Jenkin Pugh.

On quitting their retreat at Whitefriars, they took boat to the Tower. All three were armed with loaded pistols, and carried with them the bags designed to hold their booty, as well as the various implements which the parson thought would be required.

Mandeville did not accompany the others, his business being to wait with the horses at the foot of Tower Hill, near St. Catherine's Gate.

While passing the guard-chamber, Parson Price stopped to exchange a few friendly words with Knelm, the warden; and that individual afterwards remarked, that he looked as cheerful and unconcerned as usual, and no one would have supposed that he had a criminal design on hand.

On arriving at the Jewel Tower, the party were very warmly welcomed by the old custodian and his wife and daughter.

Regrets were, of course, expressed at Winefred's absence, but Edith was secretly not sorry that she had stayed away. The warning letter made her distrust the young damsel.

Bent upon executing his design without delay, Parson Price took old Edwards aside, and said to him, in a low, confidential tone, "Ever since we left yesterday, Cadwallader has done nothing but talk about your daughter. You are a fortunate man, cousin, in getting such a son-in-law. I don't think much of Merlin's Cave, and its hidden treasures; but I think a great deal of broad acres and substantial farm-houses, and the rents they produce. Cadwallader has three hundred a-year, if he has a penny!"

"And he likes the girl, you say, cousin?"

"Likes her? He adores her! Observe him now!"

"He does regard her very tenderly, I must own, cousin."

"Contrive to leave them together, and I'll warrant you they'll soon come to an understanding."

"Truly, I shall be glad to have it settled. I have no objections to the young man, and my daughter seems to have none. You are certain he has three hundred a-year, cousin?"

"I would I were as certain of my own tithes as he is of his rents. Better land there cannot be than Cadwallader's."

"I'll do it at once," cried old Edwards. "We'll go to the jewel-room, and I'll send my wife down stairs."

With this, he winked at Mrs. Edwards, who at once took the hint and left the room, declaring she was coming back immediately, though she had no such intention.

Parson Price at the same time winked at Jenkin Pugh, and they both followed the old custodian to the jewel chamber.

The loving pair were thus left alone together, and Cadwallader seemed disposed to improve the opportunity.

The moment had now arrived for action. No sooner had they entered the jewel chamber, than Flodoard—for we must now give him his proper designation—contrived to place himself between Edwards and the door, so as to cut off the old custodian's retreat.

This precaution was not unnecessary, for Edwards became alarmed at a sudden change in the parson's demeanour, as well as by the altered expression of his countenance.

"Anything the matter with you, cousin?" he asked.

"'Tis time you knew our real business here," rejoined Blood, in a stern voice, and with a menacing look. "Not to waste time, you will be pleased to understand that we mean to help ourselves to these jewels."

"Ah! have I been deceived by you all this time?" cried Edwards, transported with rage and terror. "You are robbers in disguise! Fool that I was to trust you!"

"Ay, our stratagem has succeeded perfectly!" rejoined Blood, in a mocking tone; "and now, my worthy friend, listen to what I have to say. For your own sake, I advise you to take the matter quietly and philosophically. You shall be no loser by the transaction. I swear to you, by all that is sacred, that we will give you a share in the plunder—a share large enough to make you rich. I do not ask you to help us, but keep quiet."

"Avarice, tempting fiend!" cried Edwards,

furiously. "Do you think me capable of betraying my trust?"

"I think you a sensible man, and alive to your interests," observed Blood, with a sneer.

"Oh, that my pistols were within reach!" cried Edwards; "I would soon show you—Help!—treason!—murder!"

A cloak thrown over his head by Flodoard stifled his cries, and while he was in this state the two ruffians bore him to the ground, gagged him, and bound him hand and foot with cords. They then left him in this helpless condition, to watch their proceedings.

Violent hands were first laid by Blood on the imperial crown.

With what eagerness he clutched it! The diamonds seemed to glitter more brightly than ever as he gazed at them.

His intention had been to beat the crown flat with the mallet, in order that he might carry it off with greater ease; but he was now seized with compunction, and stayed his impious hand. The magnificent diadem was, therefore, fortunately preserved from destruction.

While he was thus deliberating, the poor old custodian made desperate but unavailing efforts to free himself, and groaned so dismally, that Blood, with a deep imprecation, threatened to brain him if he did not remain quiet.

Meantime, Flodoard had pounced upon the King's sceptre, and having broken off the cross at the top, which was covered with precious stones, with a large table diamond in the centre, had begun to file the thick, golden rod, which was nearly three feet in length, in order to break it in twain.

Hitherto, nothing had occurred to disturb the villains in their task. Blood had secured the orb, and was unscrewing the head of the ampulla, when some alarming sounds reached him. He cautiously opened the door, and then became assured that a fierce struggle was going on below, between Montalt and some other person.

"Thousand devils!" he exclaimed, as he came back. "We are discovered! We must fly!"

On hearing this, Edwards made another desperate effort to raise himself and utter a cry. The attempt nearly cost the old man his life. Blood dealt him a blow on the head with the mallet that stretched him senseless on the floor.

What a pang it cost the desperate to lose the treasures that he had so nearly made his!

own! He miserably roared with rage and vexation as he gazed his last at them, and, for a moment, thought of sweeping off all he could carry.

But prudence checked his rapacity; and contenting himself, perforce, with the orb and crown—the latter of which he concealed under his gown—he quitted the jewel-chamber.

He was followed by Flodoard, who had broken off the pommel of the sceptre, and secured the rubies and emeralds with which it was adorned, but was obliged to leave the golden rod behind.

XVI.

A STRUGGLE FOR THE CROWN.

LET us now see what had befallen Montalt. Considering the circumstances, he had played his part remarkably well. Indeed, he was really smitten by the charms of the golden-haired damsel. Throwing himself at her feet, he declared his passion, and soon found that he need not despair.

Carried away by the ardour of his feelings, he confessed to the soft-hearted maiden that he had practised a deception upon her; and, having got over this difficulty far better than he expected, he told her all, essaying to inflame her imagination by dilating upon the splendid manner in which they would live abroad; but she was so bewildered, that she scarcely listened to him.

While he was in the midst of these glowing descriptions, the door burst open, and Talbot Harland came in. His manner betokened great excitement.

"Where is your father?" he demanded of Edith.

"In the jewel-chamber, with my cousin Price and a friend," she replied.

"They are robbers who are with him," cried Talbot—"come to steal the Crown jewels, and this is one of them."

"Hold your peace, sir," cried Montalt, drawing a pistol and levelling it at Talbot's head, "or you are a dead man."

But he hesitated to fire, from the fear of giving the alarm; and, seeing this, Talbot sprang upon him, and a desperate struggle took place between them. Edith was so frightened at the sight of the pistol, that she fell back in a half-fainting state.

Meanwhile, the struggle continued, and both being vigorous and extremely active young men, the issue seemed doubtful. The pistol, having dropped from Montalt's grasp, and lay upon the ground.

The combatants were thus engaged, when Blood and Flodoard passed the door, which was left ajar. Blood, being encumbered by the crown, did not attempt to offer any assistance, but Flodoard dashed in at once, and soon liberated his comrade.

By their combined efforts Talbot was thrown to the ground, and with such force that he was stunned for the moment, giving them time to effect their escape.

Picking up the pistol, they went out, locked the door, but did not take away the key, and joined Blood, who was anxiously waiting for them at the entrance. All three then went forth so quietly that they did not attract the attention of the sentry, who was pacing to and fro in front of the tower. As soon, however, as they got to a little distance, they quickened their pace.

The robbers had not been gone more than a minute, when Mrs. Edwards, who had heard some noises for which she could not account, came to the room where she had left her daughter and her suitor, and finding the door locked, instantly unfurnished it, and released Talbot, who by this time had recovered from the fall.

Without entering into any explanation to the astounded dame, who could not imagine how he came there, the young man started in pursuit of the robbers.

As he issued forth, he descried them near the north-west angle of the White Tower, and dashed after them as quickly as he could, shouting lustily as he ran.

His shouts were heard by some warders and musketeers who happened to be on the parade at the time, and these persons seeing the robbers hurry down the descent, to the Bloody Tower, instantly gave chase.

The fugitives had passed through the archway, and were speeding along the outer ward to the Byward Tower, when their pursuers burst from the archway of the Bloody Tower, and gave the alarm.

A sentry was on the bridge, near the Middle Tower, but there was only one warder at the time at the first gate.

This was Kenelm. Hearing the alarm, he instantly put himself in a position to stop the fugitives, though he could scarcely believe his eyes when he perceived that the foremost of them was Parson Price. Blood had got a pistol in his right hand, but he kept it concealed under his cassock. Beneath his other arm he tightly grasped the crown.

"What's the matter, sir?" cried Kenelm,

herring the way with his halbert, as the fugitives came up.

"Heaven knows! I don't!" rejoined Blood.

"But let us pass."

"No, sir; I can't do that," said the warder.

"You must stop and give an account of yourselves. I fear I have been greatly mistaken in you, sir."

"No mistake in that!" cried Blood, discharging the pistol at his head.

The bullet brushed the warder's cheek, but did him no harm. Kenelm, however, fell back, and the conspirators rushed on. The sentry on the bridge, startled by the report of the pistol, ordered them to stand; but as they took no heed, he fired at them, and wounding Flodoard in the leg, prevented his further flight. Blood dashed past; but Montalt was seized and detained.

Among the first who came up was Talbot Harland, and finding that Blood had escaped, he hurried after him.

The fugitive flung his useless pistol into the Tower moat, but held another in readiness. He had passed the Lion's Tower without hindrance; but being opposed by another sentry at the Bulwark Gate, he discharged his second pistol at him, and the man, though not hit, dropped.

Once out of the fortress, Blood deemed himself safe. He saw Mandeville, with the horses, near Saint Catherine's Gate, and shouted to him. His vigilant follower, who was on the look-out, at once hastened to meet him.

Loud shouts now told the fugitive that he was hotly pursued; and, looking back, he perceived that Talbot was close behind him. Still he was safe if he could only reach his horse, and Mandeville was pressing on.

Next moment he came up. Blood's hand was upon the saddle, but he could not mount without abandoning the crown, the object of his especial solicitude. While he hesitated, he was seized by Talbot Harland.

"Yield, villain!" cried the young man, almost breathless with exertion. "You are my prisoner!"

Blood offered no resistance, for a dozen musketeers came up at the instant.

No sooner did Mandeville find that his leader was captured, and that he himself must be captured if he stayed, than he galloped off; and though two or three shots were fired at him by the musketeers, he effected his

"What have you got beneath your gown,

villain?" demanded Talbot Harland of the captive.

"'Tis the crown," replied Blood, whose ~~eyes~~ ^{face} astonished all those around him. "Own that I have made a gallant struggle for it. Our gracious Sovereign never fought better for his crown. Had I not been loth to part with the diadem, you would not have captured me."

"The treasonable attempt will cost you your head, villain!" said Talbot, as he took the crown from him. "Is this all you have laid hands on? You may as well confess; you will be closely searched anon."

The astonishment of the beholders was increased as Blood coolly produced the orb, and delivered it to his captor.

"Search me as closely as you please, you will find nothing more," he said.

"Bring him to the Tower at once," said Talbot to the musketeers, who had surrounded the prisoner. "He will there be interrogated by Sir Gilbert Talbot."

"Hie on, quickly," he added to Kenelm, the warder, who had followed in the pursuit, "and let a cannon be fired to apprize his Majesty that this desperate attempt has failed."

Kenelm hurried off instantly on the errand.

As this order was issued, a cloud gathered on the prisoner's brow.

"Has the King received information of the attempt?" he asked.

"Ay," replied Talbot, "or I should not have been here to prevent it."

Blood's brow grew darker, and he uttered a deep malediction.

He was then conducted by the guard to the fortress.

Just as he passed through the yawning archway of the By-ward Tower, the thunder of the cannon resounding from the summit of Traitors' Gate, proclaimed his capture.

XVII.

BLOOD IS INTERROGATED BY THE KING.

We must now inquire after the poor old custodian, whom we left bound hand and foot, gagged, and in a state of insensibility on the floor of the jewel-chamber.

In this state he was found by his wife and daughter, who did their best to succour him, but it is certain he would have died of grief if the crown and orb had not been recovered.

When they were brought back to the Jewel Tower, and once more consigned to his custody, his joy was extravagant.

The table diamond, with the rubies, emeralds, and other precious stones, that had broken from the sceptre, were found upon Floard, and restored to the custodian. Nothing, indeed, was lost.

While Blood and his associates underwent an examination by Sir Gilbert Talbot and Lord Faversham, who by this time had arrived at the Tower, Talbot Harland hastened to Whitehall to acquaint the King with the capture of the conspirators.

Charles thanked him warmly for his zeal, and sent for Dorinda and Sabine, that they might hear the details.

Sabine listened to them with the deepest interest; and when Talbot concluded his recital, she again threw herself at the King's feet, and besought her father's life.

Charles raised her kindly, and said, "I am going to the Tower at once, and will interrogate him in person. If mercy can be shown it shall not be withheld. That is all the promise I can make."

Attended only by Talbot Harland, the King then proceeded to the Tower, and on arriving there, repaired at once to the Lieutenant's lodgings, where he found Sir Gilbert Talbot and Lord Faversham, both of whom appeared well pleased to see his Majesty.

"Blood is obstinacy personified," said Sir Gilbert. "We have threatened to put him to the rack, but he derides the threat, and declares he will confess nothing save to your Majesty. His accomplices are just as obstinate."

"Where is the arch-traitor?" demanded Charles.

"He is now in the Devilin Tower," replied Sir Gilbert. "His comrades are in separate cells of the lower dungeon. One of them has been slightly wounded. Your Majesty will be pleased to learn that all the jewels have been recovered."

"That is well," replied Charles. "Let Blood be brought before me. I will interrogate him myself."

Orders were immediately given to that effect; and Charles proceeded to the council-chamber, a large room in which state prisoners were usually examined.

Here the conspirators engaged in the Gunpowder Treason were examined by the Commissioners; and a monument was subsequently placed within it to commemorate the event. The body of King James the First occupied a chamber near this monument. Portraits of the King of Salisbury, of the Duke of Northampton,

Nottingham, and Suffolk, of Sir Edward Dacre and Sir William Waade, Lieutenant of the Tower in King James's time, adorned the panels. A long oak table stood in the midst of the room, and on either side of this table were ranged carved oak chairs, with a raised seat at the head, on which the King seated himself.

After the lapse of a few minutes, a door at the lower end of the room was opened by Sir Gilbert Talbot, and the prisoner was brought in by two musketeers.

Having placed him at a certain distance from the royal chair, the guards, at a sign from the King, retired. Sir Gilbert Talbot also withdrew.

The King and Blood were then left alone. There was a brief silence, during which Charles fixed a searching glance upon the prisoner, who bore the scrutiny unmoved.

Blood was now free from the canonicals in which he had disguised himself, and appeared in his ordinary apparel. His demeanour was bold, but respectful; and when brought before the King, he made a profound reverence. As Charles did not address him, he at last broke silence.

"As yet, I have refused to speak," he said, in a firm voice; "and the torture with which I have been threatened by Sir Gilbert Talbot would not have forced a word from me. But I am ready to answer any question put to me by your Majesty."

"I recognise in you my nocturnal visitor at Knole," observed Charles, still regarding him steadfastly.

"Yes, my liege, I am he," replied Blood. "Since that night I have been the happy instrument of saving your Majesty from many a secret peril. I have been untiring in my zeal to serve you."

"The desperate act you have just committed is scarcely consistent with your professions of zeal in my service," said the King, coldly.

"Is it possible your Majesty does not discern my motive for the act?" rejoined Blood, with an almost incredible effrontery. "I fancied it would be palpable to you, if to me and else. Looked upon as they now are, these jewels are a mine of wealth entirely lost to your Majesty. The idea occurred to me that I could enable you to turn them to account. Had my scheme succeeded, your Majesty would have been a gainer by some millions. I knew that your private purse is not too well-stocked."

In spite of himself, the King could not help laughing.

"Then you meant first to rob me, and next bring me the proceeds of the robbery, eh?" he said.

"Precisely, my liege, and I think you will own it was an admirably devised plan. For obvious reasons, I could not consult your Majesty beforehand; but I felt sure you would prefer money to diamonds. Though the scheme has failed, I deserve my reward, since I have endangered my life in your Majesty's service."

"I can scarcely credit your representations," said the King, upon whom the prisoner's extraordinary assurance had produced an impression.

"I can convince you of their truth, my liege," said Blood. "You have no one near you, not even Chiffinch, on whom you may so confidently rely as on me. When I had last the honour of conversing with your Majesty, I explained that I am the head of a secret society, the members of which are bound by a terrible oath to avenge each other. Were you to put me to death, the poniards of my comrades would inevitably reach you; but I have to such apprehension. So far from punishing me, I am persuaded you will adequately reward my zeal and devotion. Employ me, sire, and you will find me faithful and ready to obey your slightest behest, *be it what it may*. If I am unscrupulous, I am loyal and staunch to the backbone."

Blood's manner has been described by Evelyn as *dangerously insinuating*. On the present occasion, his rough plausibility captivated the King.

"You are already engaged to the Duke of Buckingham," observed Charles.

"Not to speak it profanely, sire, I do not serve two masters. If I devote myself to you, I shall serve you only. With me at your elbow, you will have nothing to fear. You will learn all the secrets of your enemies."

"Answer me one question, and answer it truly," said the King. "Has the Count de Bellegarde had aught to do with this scheme?"

"I am the sole contriver of it, my liege. The plan, as I have explained, was for your Majesty's benefit, and was only confided to those over whom I have perfect control."

For some moments Charles appeared lost in reflection.

Blood watched him narrowly, and felt sure he had gained his point. Nor was he mistaken.

"I think you may prove useful to me," said the King, at length. "I will therefore retain you. You shall have a post at Court."

"Your Majesty will never regret your generosity," cried Blood, scarcely able to repress his exultation.

"Stay!" exclaimed Charles; "there is a difficulty that I have overlooked. You are the author of the attack on the Duke of Ormond?"

"I will not attempt to deny it, my liege," returned Blood.

"You must have his pardon as well as mine."

"His Grace will refuse nothing to your Majesty. He will forgive me far more readily than he will forgive the Duke of Buckingham."

Charles made no remark on the latter observation, but struck a small bell that was placed on the table near him.

The summons immediately brought in the guard; while Sir Gilbert Talbot, with Lord Feversham and Talbot Harland, issued from a side door.

Blood folded his arms on his broad chest, and regarded them haughtily. They were all amazed at his audacity.

"I trust your Majesty has found the prisoner less contumacious than I found him," observed Gilbert.

"He has answered all my questions frankly and satisfactorily," replied Charles.

"Then, I presume, the interrogation is ended. Let him be removed, and taken back to the Devilin Tower."

Upon this, the guards advanced, but were checked by a gesture from the King.

"The prisoner is free!" cried Charles. "I have pardoned him!"

"Pardoned him, sire?" exclaimed Sir Gilbert, scarcely able to credit what he heard. "It is not for me to question the wisdom of your Majesty's decision, but——"

"His offence is personal to myself."

"True, my liege."

"I have, therefore, a right to forgive it. I have pardoned him and his associates."

"But he has been guilty of other crimes, sire. He is suspected of being the leader of the attack on his Grace of Ormond."

"He has confessed his guilt," said the King. "But there are mitigating circumstances."

"Mitigating circumstances!" exclaimed Lord Feversham, astounded.

"Ay, my lord," replied the King. "You will go at once to Clarendon House; tell the Duke of Ormond what I have said, and use your best endeavours with his Grace to obtain from him Colonel Blood's pardon."

"I will do your Majesty's bidding," rejoined

Lord Feversham; "but I confess that I do not like the errand."

So saying, he withdrew.

"What is to be done with Blood and his associates, sire?" asked Sir Gilbert Talbot.

"Let them be detained till the Duke of Ormond's answer is received," replied the King. "If favourable, as I anticipate it will be, they are immediately to be discharged."

With this, he quitted the council-chamber, and immediately afterwards returned to Whitehall, attended by Talbot Harland.

Before his Majesty's departure, Sir Gilbert Talbot besought him to gratify the poor old custodian of the Jewel Tower by a visit; but,

though ordinarily good-natured, Charles refused. Perhaps he did not like to see the old man, after pardoning his assailants.

He had not long returned to Whitehall, when Lord Feversham made his appearance.

"Well, what says the Duke?" demanded Charles.

"These are his exact words, my liege: 'If his Majesty can forgive Blood for stealing the crown, I can easily forgive him the attempt on my life. 'Tis enough for me to learn his Majesty's pleasure.' That was all he said."

"A noble answer, and worthy of him," cried Charles. "Now go back to the Tower, and let the prisoners be liberated."

BOOK THE FOURTH:

THE MULBERRY GARDEN.

I.

FLORIO.

Nor many days after Colonel Blood's liberation from the Tower, he was established at Whitehall, with a secret pension of five hundred a-year.

He now gave himself an air of great importance, dressed richly, and was constantly to be seen amid the throng of courtiers assembled in the Stone Gallery. Though hated by the young gallants, and shunned by the graver members of the Court, he escaped insult, owing to his formidable character.

The familiarity with which he was treated by the King could not fail to give him weight, and suitors began to apply to him to use his influence in their behalf with his Majesty. But his influence, such as it was, was never exercised—save for a consideration. This he made the applicants clearly understand.

He had the privilege of the back-stairs, and was always privately admitted to the cabinet. He was the terror of ushers, pages, and lackeys, but was on very good terms with Chiffinch, who was secretly rather afraid of him.

With the Count de Bellegarde, Blood was rather distant, and there did not appear to be any intimacy between them.

The conduct of Charles towards a desperado whose offences were so enormous and so notorious, has always appeared incomprehensible to historians—and it remains a mystery to this day, unless we have succeeded in throwing a light upon it.

Blood's apartments were in the wing of the Palace that stood between the privy garden and the inner court. The rooms were pleasant enough, and tolerably well furnished. His three followers, who had been liberated from the Tower at the same time, as himself, were constantly with him, and proved very useful in various ways. Perhaps he meditated some

other extraordinary *coup*—who knows? If he did so, he was prevented from accomplishing it, as will be seen.

Sabine had disappeared. She had incurred his displeasure, and he made no inquiries about her.

Just before Blood entered upon his post at Whitehall, a very good-looking, dark-eyed youth, named Florio, was appointed one of the Queen's pages. Placed in attendance on the maids of honour by Chiffinch, Florio soon became an especial favourite with Dorinda Neville, and was constantly in her ante-chamber.

Talbot Harland could not fail to hear of the pretty page, but, strange to say, he never caught sight of him.

To be jealous of a page was absurd, but Talbot could not repress the feeling; and when paying a visit one morning to Dorinda, he took occasion to mention the matter to her. She laughed at him very heartily, and said,—

"Some time ago you chose to be jealous of the Count de Bellegarde. Now you are still more unreasonable, and trouble your silly head about my poor little Florio. I own I am fond of the boy. He is by far the prettiest of her Majesty's pages; and so amiable and obliging, that I have chosen him for my own particular attendant, and he devotes himself exclusively to me."

"So I hear," replied Talbot, very much piqued by her manner.

"I find him very agreeable," she pursued. "He sings like a nightingale, and plays the guitar better than the Count de Bellegarde."

"No end of accomplishments," observed Talbot, with a sneer.

"My aunt, Lady Muskerrey, will tell you that he dances delightfully. Indeed, he cannot help dancing well, for he has the lightest and most graceful figure imaginable."

It was evident that she wished to heighten her lover's jealousy; and she succeeded.

Talbot could not conceal his annoyance.

"Is he here?" he cried, quickly. "If so, pray call him. I should like to see whether he is as charming as represented."

"I dare say you will find him in the ante-chamber when you go forth," she rejoined.

"I shall certainly not summon him."

"Then I will!" he cried, clapping his hands.

"What ho, Florio!"

The door was partially opened, and the symmetrical figure of a page was visible for an instant.

Only for an instant, for Dorinda called out to him not to come in, and the page vanished.

Talbot had sense enough left to perceive that he was making himself ridiculous, and that by any further exhibition of ill-temper, he might forfeit Dorinda's regard.

He, therefore, deemed it expedient to alter his tone; and had begun to assume a penitent air, when Lady Muskerrey came in.

Her ladyship was as fantastically dressed as usual, and her cheeks were covered with fard and patches.

After kissing Dorinda, and saluting Talbot, she said, "I am come to propose a walk in St. James's Park. The morning is enchanting. His Majesty and the Duchess of Portsmouth are gone to feed the ducks in the long canal. All the world is out and taking an airing. Shall we go?"

"By all means, aunt," replied Dorinda. "Let us go to Rosamond's Pond and the Bird-cage Walk."

"Agreed!" cried her ladyship. "The Bird-cage Walk will lead us to the Lime Walk, and the Lime Walk will bring us to the Mulberry Gardens, where there is a concert. We can go in and hear it."

"And while listening to the music, we can eat cheese-cakes, aunt. I detest the cheese-cakes at the Mulberry Gardens."

"They are excellent," cried her ladyship. "You shall eat as many as you please."

"I hope I may be permitted to snake one of the party?" said Talbot.

"I counted upon you," replied Lady Muskerrey. "Apropos, Dorinda, we must have your pretty page, Florio, with us. You have seen Florio, of course, Mr. Harland? Is he not charming?"

"Mr. Harland saw him for a moment just now, aunt," interposed Dorinda. "But it is impossible I can bring him."

"Why not, my love?"

"He never leaves the palace, aunt," he did, if you think Mr. Harland would care for his attendance," she added, smiling.

"Oh, you're quite mistaken!" he cried.

But finding he was again getting on dangerous ground, he made his bow, promising to meet them in half an hour at Rosamond's Pond.

As he passed through the ante-chamber, he looked about for Florio, but the page was not to be seen.

There were several pages in the gallery, and Florio might be among them; but how was he to distinguish him?

II.

ST. JAMES'S PARK.

NEVER was St. James's Park more agreeable as a place of promenade than in Charles the Second's time.

Properly speaking, it belonged to the palace; but the good-natured monarch liked to be surrounded by his subjects, and so threw it open to them.

During the Protectorate, the park had been much neglected; but on the Restoration, Charles laid it out according to his own taste, improving it in many ways by opening a variety of charming walks among the trees, and embellishing them with a multitude of ornamental objects.

Besides enlarging Rosamond's Pond, he formed a long canal, which he stocked with wild-fowl. Narrow as it was, this canal boasted an island, and the island possessed a governor, who was no other than the famous St. Evremont.

Connected with the canal was a large decoy for wild-ducks. A ring fence for deer added greatly to the attractions of this part of the park.

Lady Muskerrey had correctly informed her niece that the King and the Duchess of Portsmouth had walked forth to the long canal. They were attended by the Duke of Buckingham and the Countess of Bellaguard.

His Majesty was strolling slowly along the banks of the canal, feeding the ducks, which swam after him by dozens. Nothing pleased the King more than to witness their content as they browsed on the food which he threw among them. But at last his supply was exhausted, and he walked on with the Duchess, who, notwithstanding, was not quite so much amused as he was by the spectacle.

The day was delightful, the flowers were in full bloom, and the Lime Walk, which was at the end of Rosamond's Pond, was crowded with a brilliant company of gallants in velvet doublets of every hue, all eyes being directed

perukes, and with fair dames in exquisite morning costumes.

Though Charles, as we have said, placed no restraint upon those who chose to take exercise within the park, he was rarely intruded upon, and all who now passed him bowed respectfully, and went on.

He was followed, however, at a certain distance, by four individuals, who remained stationary when he halted, and moved on when he resumed his promenade.

These persons were well dressed, and wore long rapiers; and one of them, whose habiliments were somewhat richer, and his rapier even longer, than those of his companions, had a haughty, defiant look, which could belong to no other than Colonel Blood.

Blood it was, who, with his comrades, acted as a guard to the King. Hitherto, Charles had dispensed with such attendance, but Blood persuaded him that the precaution was necessary.

After chatting for some minutes with the Duchess of Portsmouth, Charles allowed her to walk on with Buckingham, and as soon as she was out of hearing, addressed himself to Bellegarde.

"I want some information from you, Count," he said. "What has become of Blood's daughter? The ungrateful girl left Whitehall without even staying to thank me for the pardon which, at her solicitation, I had granted her father."

"Perhaps she was afraid of seeing your Majesty, thinking you might ask some favour in return, that she might not be disposed to grant."

"Her flight annoyed me greatly," said Charles. "Her image haunts me, and I must see her again. I have questioned Blood about her, but he professes to be entirely ignorant of her retreat; and, in this instance, I think he speaks the truth. Dorinda Nevill, I am sure, knows whither she has fled, but I can elicit nothing from her. As a last resource, I address myself to you."

"Your Majesty could not apply to any one less able to assist you."

"Say no more, Count, and then I may credit the wisdom. I am certain you know where she is."

"Since your Majesty entertains that conviction, it becomes incumbent on me to affirm the contrary. Nevertheless—"

"That is far more than I desire, please," said Charles, without waiting for a reply, he quitted his post, and rejoined the Duchess.

"The Duke of Buckingham has just been relating to me a strange circumstance connected with Claude Duval, sire," observed the Duchess, as the King came up.

"With Claude Duval?" exclaimed Charles. "Has the rascal reappeared?"

"He threatens to do so," rejoined Buckingham, laughing. "I have just received a cartel from him."

"Oddsfish! that's excellent!" cried the King, laughing. "How was the challenge delivered?"

"Your Majesty shall hear," replied the Duke. "Pray listen to the story, Count," he added, to Bellegarde. "It will amuse you. The other night, while I was chatting with Wycherley and Sedley in the blue saloon, Lady Muskerrey and a bevy of fair dames came out of the ball-room, where dancing was going on, and pressed me to sing my ballad about Claude Duval.

"Not being in the humour to oblige them, I excused myself by saying that Duval's achievements had been completely thrown into the shade by Blood's late exploit at the Tower, and that I believed the gallant robber had retired from his profession in disgust. At all events, until he performed some fresh action more daring and surprising than any that had gone before, I should cease to chant his praises. They tried hard to persuade me to sing a few couplets, but I continued inexorable.

"Well, I thought no more of the circumstance until this morning, when, as I was passing along the Stone Gallery, a page slipped a letter into my hand. Fancying it might be a *billet-doux*, though I had no idea who could send me one, I did not read it at the moment. Guess my surprise when I found that it came from Claude Duval!"

"Have you the letter with you?" inquired the King.

"Yes, my liege," replied the Duke. "And I think the rascal's impertinence will amuse you. It is addressed, as you perceive, 'To his Grace the Duke of Buckingham.'"

"Mr. John Dury—"

"I have felt highly flattered by being made the hono^r of one of those inimitable ballads which your Grace alone can compose, and which afford so much amusement to the wisest monarch in Europe.

"I am obliged to leave the ballad merely your Grace, and I trust you will not refuse me that extraordinary gratification."

"Apropos of this ballad! Your Grace was pleased to state the other night, to a party of Court dames at Whitehall, that I have retired from my profession in disgust, because I have been superseded by Colonel Blood."

"Your Grace has been misinformed. I do not recognise Colonel Blood, and I shall not retire till the list of achievements I have marked out for myself is complete."

"The most important feat of all remains to be accomplished."

"My catalogue, as I need scarcely remark to your Grace, who is as well acquainted with it as myself, comprises the names of many illustrious persons—His Majesty and the Duchess of Portsmouth, Lady Muskerry and the Duchess of Cleveland, Count de Bellegarde and Mr. Talbot Harland."

"But it wants the great name of the Duke of Buckingham."

"I trust to have the honour of an early meeting with your Grace, when I will satisfy you that I have not abandoned my old pursuit, and at the same time furnish you with material for the finishing couplet of your incomparable ballad."

"*A notre prochaine rencontre!*"

"CLAUDE DUVAL."

All his hearers laughed most heartily as the Duke concluded the letter.

"What think you of it, my liege?" cried the Duke.

"Think of it!" exclaimed Charles, laughing. "Oddsfish! 'tis the most delicious piece ofrodomontade I ever heard!"

"What puzzles me, is how Duval can have heard of the remarks made by your Grace to Lady Muskerry and the other ladies," observed the Duchess, to Buckingham.

"Bah!" cried Charles. "Lady Muskerry is the greatest gossip on earth, and repeats all the tittle-tattle she hears."

"Your Grace says the letter was delivered to you by a page," observed Bellegarde. "Did you notice him?"

"I had not time," replied the Duke. "Almost at the instant the note was slipped into my hand, the bearer disappeared."

"Your Grace's name will figure in Monsieur Duval's catalogue—on that you may rely," cried the Duchess of Portsmouth, laughing. "I hope you will oblige him by adding your famous ballad," she added, with a slightly mocking tone.

"Impossible to foretell what may happen," replied the Duke. "But I rather think not."

"If you are caught, I will bet a hundred

guineas that you do sing it," cried Bellegarde.

"Done!" rejoined Buckingham. "I will go further; I will give you a hundred guineas for every couplet I sing."

"And two hundred for the finale," laughed Bellegarde.

"The bet will come to nothing," remarked Charles. "The whole thing is a jest, got up at your Grace's expense by the ladies whom you disappointed of the ballad. Ridiculous to suppose that the note in question came from Claude Duval. They are trying to frighten you."

"I venture to differ in opinion from your Majesty," replied Buckingham. "I believe the note does come from Duval. But if the rascal attempts to stop me, he shall pay for his temerity with his life."

"Come, let us go to the Mulberry Garden, and eat cheeseques," observed Charles, to the Duchess of Portsmouth.

And they walked on in that direction.

III.

CHEESECAKES AND CHAMPAGNE.

THE Mulberry Garden has long since disappeared, and Buckingham Palace occupies its site.

Dr. King's lines seem almost prophetic. He thus wrote about the spot in 1709:—

"The fate of things lies always in the dark:
What Cavalier would know St. James's Park?
A princely palace on that space does rise,
Where Sedley's noble mausoleum mulberries."

The place derived its name from a grove of mulberry trees planted by James I, who was anxious to naturalise the silkworm; and although the experiment failed, the trees flourished, and eventually became the chief ornament of the extensive pleasure-gardens laid out on the spot.

Arbours, in which collations and suppers could be served; smooth-shaven grass-plots, on which dancing sometimes took place; long, shady alleys, or "lovers' walks" as they were styled; and a wilderness, so thick and tangled, that those who ventured within it were not unfrequently lost; these constituted the attractions of the Mulberry Garden.

In the midst stood a tavern, renowned for its wines and its cuisine, and noted also for the extravagance of its charges. To this tavern was attached a large room, in which concerts, balls, and other entertainments were given.

No place of public amusement was more in vogue than the Mulberry Garden in the time of the Merry Monarch. It is often referred to



EDITH EDWARDS IS PRESENTED TO THE KING. (See page 80.)

by the dramatists and satirical writers of the period, and has given the title to one of Sedley's best comedies. Amongst other things, the place was celebrated for its cheesecakes. Everybody resorted there to eat them.

His Majesty's appearance in the Mulberry Garden did not create any extraordinary sensation—it being understood that at such times he entirely dispensed with form and etiquette. Of course, a certain deference was paid him, and his movements and those of his attendants were watched with interest, but no one intruded upon the royal party.

Though the hour was early, there was a good deal of well-dressed company in the garden, and a peculiar character was given to the scene, since many of the ladies wore too masks.

The pleasant game of pall-mall, which, after a long discontinuance, has been revived in our days under the appellation of croquet, was being played with great spirit by a number of fair dames and gaily attired gallants on the lawn.

A band placed in an orchestra near the tavern enlivened the company with its strains. Mirth and good humour seemed generally to prevail, for a great deal of jesting and laughter was heard among the assemblage. To make the most of the passing hour, and banish reflection, was the main object in those halcyon days.

No one went to the Mulberry Garden save for amusement; and everybody found it there, except, perhaps, those who were jealous of their spouses. But these were in the minority, since, happily, jealousy was then out of fashion.

We shall not follow the couples that sought the seclusion of the shady alley, or lost themselves amid the groves of mulberry trees, but confine ourselves to the lively picture offered to our view in the centre of the garden. There we shall find plenty to look at.

On the lawn, as we have said, or on the broad gravel-walks around it, all the best part of the company was assembled. A concert was going on in the music-hall within the tavern, but few were disposed to listen to it. The day being very fine, they preferred the open air amusements.

Little parties were collected round rustic tables placed beneath the mulberry trees, devouring cheesecakes and drinking ale; while others, who preferred retirement, had similar refreshments served to them in the arbours.

Altogether, it was a very gay scene, and he

must have been a cynic indeed who could not be amused by it.

On entering the Mulberry Garden, the first persons whom his Majesty, and those with him, encountered, were Lady Muskerrey and her companions.

Notwithstanding her absurdities, her ladyship was a great favourite with the Duchess of Portsmouth, and she was, consequently, permitted to join the royal party. Dorinda, who was very fond of pall-mall, and played the game to admiration, was invited to join the party on the lawn, and readily assented.

Talbot likewise excelled in the game, and took care not to be left out; and the Count de Bellegarde, who played at everything, and played everything well, followed suit.

Lady Muskerrey would have followed suit, but her niece would not allow her to make herself publicly ridiculous.

While engaged in this pleasant pastime, Dorinda looked charming. Nothing could be better calculated to display the singular graces of her figure than this game; and her bloom was heightened by the exercise.

Talbot was more in love than ever; and having eyes only for her, played very badly, and got laughed at, while Bellegarde performed wonders.

The King, who, as we know, liked all sorts of pastimes, watched the game with interest, and bestowed unqualified commendation on Dorinda's performance.

Colemeel Blood felt it incumbent upon himself to follow his royal master into the garden, but he kept at a respectful distance; and, seeing that the King was likely to remain, he sat down with his comrades at a table under a mulberry-tree, whence he could discern all that was going on.

"I thought we came here to eat cheesecakes, and not to look at that tiresome game of pall-mall," observed the Duchess.

Begging her a thousand pardons, Charles addressed himself to Buckingham, who undertook that all should be ready in a very few minutes; and he hurried off to his good as his word, for he presently returned, and conducted them to an arbour, where an excellent collation had been laid out.

They were waited upon by the master of the garden, and his principal attendants. No ceremony was observed. Lady Muskerrey and Buckingham sat down at the table, and, ere long, the party was reinforced by Dorinda and the two gallants, when they had finished their game at pall-mall.

The ladies greatly enjoyed the chesscakes, and did not object to the champagne that accompanied them.

The Count de Bellegarde, as usual, made himself extremely agreeable, and was diverting the company with a very amusing story, when his cloak was slightly pulled, and a billet slipped into his hand.

Seated, as he was, at the entrance of the harbour, his position favoured the delivery of the billet.

Covering it with his laced handkerchief, he went on with his story, as if nothing had happened.

Perhaps he thought the incident had escaped observation. If so, he was mistaken.

As soon as he finished, the King began to rally him unmercifully.

"What, Count!" he cried; "the ladies will not let you alone! You cannot pass an hour in the Mulberry Garden without making a conquest!"

"More conquests are made in the Mulberry Garden than anywhere else," observed Buckingham; "but the billet just received by the Count came from the palace."

"How know you that?" cried Charles.

"Because it was delivered by a page."

"Are you certain?"

"Ask Talbot Harland, sire. He is sitting opposite Bellegarde, and must have seen the bearer of the billet."

"He certainly appeared to be a page," said Talbot, when appealed to by his Majesty. "But he was masked."

"Oddsfish! that does not mend the matter," cried Charles.

Then, turning to Bellegarde, he added, "Your ignorance ought to be more prudent than to send a page here on such an errand."

"Have I your Majesty's permission to open the billet?"

"Oh! by all means. I feel for your impatience," cried the King, in a bantering tone.

"'Tis not from a lady," said the Count.

"Not from a lady!" exclaimed Buckingham. "Then I'll be sworn it comes from Claude Duval."

"A good guess," cried Bellegarde. "It is from Duval. What is more, it relates to your Grace."

"To me! Then pray let us hear it."

"Fortunately, it is not long," observed Bellegarde, proceeding to read the note.

"Monsieur le Comte,—

"You are a friend of the Duke of Bucking-

ham, and may possibly learn from his Grace that I have a little affair to arrange with him.

"Our meeting is unavoidable, and cannot be long delayed.

"Should the Duke venture to ride forth alone, I would counsel him to carry plenty of cash. He will find it more serviceable than pistols.

"Pray tell him so from

"CLAUDE DUVAL."

"After this warning, your Grace is scarcely likely to ride out unattended," observed Bellegarde, in a slightly mocking tone. "But if you do, carry a well-lined purse in your pocket. 'Twill be the safest plan."

"I will carry something better," rejoined the Duke, rather sharply. "But how comes it that the rascal can get his notes delivered by one of the royal pages?"

"Pooh! the whole thing is a jest," cried the King. "I believe Lady Muskerry herself to be at the bottom of it."

"I, sire!" exclaimed her ladyship. "I have always maintained that Monsieur Claude Duval is the mirror of politeness, and dances the gaillarde better than any other man, but I don't bribe the pages to convey his letters."

"But haven't you and your niece been playing a trick upon the Duke? Come!—confess!"

"Your Majesty is quite wrong in your suspicions," observed Dorinda.

"'Tis all very well to deny it," whispered Talbot to Dorinda; "but you must have had some hand in the trick, I am quite sure. This mysterious page is no other than your favourite Florio."

"Hush!" she rejoined, imposing silence upon him. "Don't speak of Florio now."

IV

MORE CHAMPAGNE AND CHEESECAKES.

We left Colonel Blood and his companions seated at a table beneath a mulberry-tree.

The Colonel had ordered a flask of Rhenish, and they had nearly finished it, when, to their great surprise, they saw the old custodian of the Jewel Tower and his daughter approach them.

Old Edwards looked very feeble, but Edith was as charming and obsequious as ever. She was very tastefully attired, and her symmetrical figure and golden tresses excited general admiration. She had to sustain a good deal of ogling as she moved along the walk, and she sustained it well.

Blood was not in the slightest degree abashed by the sight of the man whose life he had well-nigh taken; on the contrary, he appeared delighted to see him.

Uttering a joyful exclamation, he sprang from his seat, and rushing towards Edwards, seized both his hands, and after shaking them cordially, saluted his daughter.

Scarcely giving the old man time to speak, Blood forced him into a chair, and then called out lustily to an attendant to bring a bottle of champagne, with a dish of cheesecakes for the young lady.

If Blood only feigned satisfaction at the old custodian's unexpected appearance, Montalt was really enchanted to see Edith again. His passion for the golden-tressed damsel had by no means abated.

With the utmost *empressment* he led her to a seat at the table, and recommenced the attentions he had paid her at the Jewel Tower. Nor were his attentions unfavourably received. Things had taken such an extraordinary turn, that she could not be angry with him.

Luckily, the champagne was not long in coming, and a glass of it raised the old man's spirits, and brought back all his daughter's vivacity.

"Another glass, my good friend," said Blood, pouring out a bumper. "You can now afford to laugh at that adventure at the Jewel Tower. Ho, ho! there's a mystery about that affair," he added, with a tremendous wink; "a mystery which, with all your penetration, you will never be able to unriddle."

"I can solve the enigma," remarked Edith; "but it won't do to speak out."

And she glanced at Montalt, who replied by a significant look, that told her she was quite right in her surmise.

"The affair has certainly had a very different result from what might have been anticipated," observed Edwards to Blood. "You have been honoured and rewarded, while I have been upbraided and disgraced."

"Not disgraced, father," interposed Edith. "You have not been commended by his Majesty for your conduct, but you have not been disgraced."

"Not to be commended under such circumstances is equivalent to disgrace," said Edwards. "At least, I feel it to be so."

"A drop more champagne, my good friend," said Blood, again filling his glass. "Twill cheer your heart. To what lucky chance do I owe the pleasure of seeing you and your fair daughter in the Mulberry Garden?"

"I have been to Whitehall in quest of you, Colonel, and have followed you hither," said Edwards.

"Then you have some favour to solicit, my worthy sir," rejoined Blood, in a patronising tone. "Tis granted ere 'tis asked. I have some little interest with his Majesty."

"I am quite aware of it, Colonel," said the other; "I am told that suitors now constantly apply to you."

"You have not been incorrectly informed," observed Blood. "But what can I do for you?—ha!"

"My father desires nothing, Colonel, except to have his case represented to the King," interposed Edith. "His feelings are hurt that his services have not been recognised."

"But I am scarcely a fitting person to represent his case," said Blood, with a half-smile.

"Pardon me!" cried Edwards; "no one knows so well as yourself what efforts I made to preserve the crown."

"Let me tell you in confidence, my good friend," said Blood, tapping his nose as he spoke, "you would have pleased his Majesty much better if you had offered no resistance. Do you understand?—ha!"

"I would rather not understand," replied Edwards. "I did my duty."

"And you have your reward!" observed Blood, with a sneer.

"I always tell my father that he did wrong," said Edith; "but I can't convince him."

"You never will convince him," rejoined the old man. "A few gracious words from his Majesty are all I ask; and those he cannot, will not, refuse me."

"No more, my good friend. You quite touch my feelings," cried the arch hypocrite. "I will mention the matter to his Majesty, and I doubt not I shall prevail; but you have unwittingly offended him."

"Is it possible he can entertain such feelings towards one who has risked his life in defence of his trust?"

"My good friend, you will not understand. But come, champagne is the best remedy for grief. Here is a fresh bottle. Try it. Help the young lady, Montalt. We will drink to your daughter's speedy marriage. My friend Montalt is just as eligible as Cadwallar Pugh. He has not got three hundred a-year in land, or Merlin's Cave, with its hidden treasures; but he is a handsome young gallant, though I say it to his face, and knows how to make money."

"And to spend it, too, I doubt not," said

Edwards. "Such a graceless galliard will not suit me."

"I should take umbrage at the term you have applied to me, sir," exclaimed Montalt; "did not my love for your fair daughter restrain me. Let me tell you, sir, that I am in a fair way of promotion; and when, through the interest of Colonel Blood, I have obtained the post to which I aspire, you will think very differently of me."

"Between ourselves, 'tis an excellent post," observed Blood to the old custodian. "But I must not particularize it."

"You will excuse me if I appear distrustful, Colonel; but I have been deceived once."

"You were wrong then, my good friend, and are wrong now," said Blood, in a low, confidential tone. "Don't discourage the young gentleman's suit. Your daughter evidently likes him."

"We will talk more about it when he has got the post," rejoined Edwards. "Meantime, I cannot allow him to come to the Jewel Tower."

Edith and her suitor here exchanged a glance, which seemed to intimate that the prohibition would not be very strictly attended to.

Just at this moment, the royal party, having finished their repast, issued from the arbour, and proceeded along the walk that passed near the table where Blood and the others were seated.

"As I live, there is his Majesty!" cried Edwards. "I did not know he was in the garden. Here is the opportunity I have prayed for. Present me to him, I entreat you, Colonel."

"Impossible, my good friend—quite impossible!" cried Blood, rising from his seat, and looking very much disturbed. "However much I may desire to serve you, I cannot—dare not do it. His Majesty would be highly displeased. Take my advice, and keep out of his sight."

"Get them out of the garden as quickly as you can," he added in a whisper to Montalt.

Montalt made an attempt to obey, but neither Edwards nor his daughter would stir from the spot.

Edith had caught sight of the Count de Bellegarde; and, besides, the vain little coquette almost fancied that his Majesty would notice her.

V.

THE OLD CUSTODIAN OBTAINS A PENSION FROM THE KING.

MEANTIME, the royal party came on; laughing and talking gaily.

The King and the Duchess of Portsmouth were a little in advance of the others.

"His Majesty will listen to me, I am sure!" cried Edwards, seized by an irresistible impulse. "Since you refuse to present me, I will throw myself at his feet."

"Madman!" cried Blood, trying to detain him.

But the old custodian broke away from his grasp, and, rushing forward, prostrated himself before the King.

So sudden was the act, that Charles really thought the suppliant had lost his senses.

"'Tis the keeper of the Crown jewels, sire. Do you not recognise him?" said the Duchess of Portsmouth.

"Oddsfish! so it is," cried the King, rather annoyed at being thus addressed in public, but assuming a gracious manner. "Arise, my good friend, and tell me what I can do for you."

"I have suffered much, my liege; but I ask nothing beyond an assurance from your Majesty that I have faithfully discharged my trust. If I do not receive it, I shall die heart-broken."

"Brave old man! he deserves a noble recompense," cried the Duchess.

"Great injustice appears to have been done you, my good friend, but it shall be promptly repaired," said the King, in a sympathising voice. "From what you say, I fear that the messages, expressive of my strong approval of your conduct, have not been delivered to you."

"No such messages have reached me, my liege," replied the old man. "But it gladdens my heart to learn that you are satisfied with me. I feared otherwise."

"You shall have wherewithal to gladden your heart," cried Charles. "Services like yours cannot be adequately rewarded, but a pension shall at once be bestowed upon you. Let this be done," he added, turning to Buckingham.

"I humbly thank your Majesty for your bounty," said the old man, bending deeply. "But your gracious words are more to me than the pension. I shall now die content."

"Think not of dying," cried Charles in a tone well calculated to cheer him. "I trust you will live long to guard my jewels. But is no

that your daughter? Methinks, I remember her. Bid her come forward."

The pretty coquette was prepared for the summons, and would, no doubt, have been sadly disappointed if she had not received it.

But her father looked confounded, and seeing that the old man was quite unequal to the occasion, Bellegarde flew to her aid, and led her towards the King.

Edith acquitted herself very well in the little ceremony that ensued, and made so graceful a reverence, that the Duchess of Portsmouth turned away in displeasure.

bashfulness was not the pretty damsel's foible, and though all eyes were upon her, she displayed no embarrassment. The compliments paid her by his Majesty were far more agree-

able to her than they were to the proud dame who overheard them; and the latter being determined to put a stop to the interview, signed to Bellegarde to take her away, and the Count was forced to comply—but not before the amorous monarch had made the fair damsel comprehend that he was not insensible to her charms.

Blood did not venture to approach the King, fearing he might have incurred his displeasure; and the cold glance thrown at him by his Majesty as he passed out of the garden, did not tend to reassure him.

As to Montalt, he had noticed the effect produced upon the King by Edith's charms, and redoubled his attentions to the bewitching damsel.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

THE COURT AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

I.

HOW THE DUKE OF YORK HUNTED THE HART IN WINDSOR FOREST.

ABOUT a week after the visit to the Mulberry Garden, their Majesties and the Court removed from Whitehall to Windsor Castle.

In this regal residence, which has not its peer in Europe, the entertainments given were on a more splendid scale than at Whitehall. Besides all the principal nobles connected with the Court, the Duke and Duchess of York, with all their retinue, had been invited, so that the Castle, vast as it is, was filled with guests.

To see the fair dames, arrayed in the richest and most becoming costumes, gathered together on the magnificent terraces, was a charming sight. To see them troop forth into the Great Park to fly the falcon, or to chase the deer, habited in their riding-dresses of green velvet, and attended by their cavaliers in their picturesque hunting costumes, was a yet more splendid spectacle.

Every day, the Duke of York, who delighted in the chase, and seemed indefatigable, hunted the stag in the forest, and all who shared his tastes attended him.

But there were others who liked hawking just as well as hunting—perhaps, preferred it; since that pleasant pastime was not so fatiguing, and did not separate them from the objects of their adoration—and these went with the King and the Duchess of Portsmouth.

Among the number was Talbot Harland. He was at all the hawking parties, and ever by the side of Dorinda. The Duchess of Portsmouth took a warm interest in his suit, and obtained a promise from the King that if the marriage could be arranged, he would give the fair damsel a handsome portion. This was communicated by the Duchess to Dorinda, who said she would think seriously on the subject, and come to a speedy decision.

Since the Court had been at Windsor Castle, Talbot had not been troubled about Florio. If he was there with the other pages, as was most probable, Talbot saw nothing of him, and Dorinda never mentioned him.

Of course, the Count de Bellegarde was at the Castle. The most amusing person connected with the Court could not be left out. Fond of active sport, and having no love-affair on hand at the moment, the Count hunted daily with the Duke of York, and appeared quite as insensible to fatigue as his Royal Highness himself. The hardest day's work never tired him. He was full of vivacity at dinner, nor did his spirits flag in the evening.

But the chase seemed to have become an all-absorbing passion with him. He talked of nothing else; and, at last, his descriptions, though vivid, became monotonous. The Duke of York sang his praises, and declared he had never seen a Frenchman ride so boldly, or kill a stag so fealty, as the Count de Bellegarde.

No wonder the Count enjoyed the chase in Windsor Forest. Nowhere else could hunting be had in such perfection as in that incomparable deer-park—nowhere else could such noble harts be found—nowhere could finer woodland scenery be gazed upon—nowhere could lovelier glades or smoother lawns be galloped over.

While hunting and hawking took place in the great park, revels were held in the Castle. Every day the distinguished guests sat down to a grand banquet in St. George's Hall; every night there was a ball.

Play went on as at Whitehall. Bellegarde was more frequently in the card-room than the ball-room. But since he had taken with so much ardor to the chase, his customary good luck seemed to have deserted him. Whether he played at cards or whist, he lost; and the Duke of Buckingham won a considerable sum from him at piquette.

DUVAL ROBS THE DUKE OF BUCKINGHAM. (See page 109.)



Apocryphos of Buckingham, we may mention that his Grace had not yet had an encounter with Claude Duval, though he declared he had given the rascal repeated opportunities of putting his threats into execution.

One night—it might be at the instigation of the Count de Bellegarde, who liked a little mischief—another attempt was made by Lady Muskerrey to induce the Duke to sing his famous ballad. He declined to gratify her.

"Excessively sorry to refuse your ladyship," he said; "but I don't mean to sing my ballad again till I can add the finishing couplet to it."

"You will have to sing it to Claude Duval should you meet him," observed Bellegarde, with a laugh. "Remember, we have a bet on the subject."

"I have not forgotten it," rejoined the Duke. "But what can I do? I can't go in search of the rascal, and he seems afraid to meet me."

"It looks like it, I must own," said Bellegarde. "But I begin to be of his Majesty's opinion, that the cartel came from Lady Muskerrey."

"*Méchant!*" cried her ladyship, tapping him playfully with her fan. "You know perfectly well I had nothing to do with it. I won't forgive you, unless you dance the gavotte with me."

Professing that nothing would delight him so much, the Count led her to the ball-room.

Next day there was a stag-hunt, as usual, in the Great Park. Many a noble gallant rode forth with the Duke of York; but not one could compare, in richness of apparel or distinction of appearance, with Buckingham or Bellegarde, both of whom joined the hunting-party.

It would have been difficult to say which of the two was the most splendidly equipped, or the best mounted. They formed the most conspicuous figures among the crowd of huntsmen collected that morning on Courbourne Chase, dotted with old oaks and thorns, lying to the right of the Long Walk, which had then only been recently planted by Charles.

No Court dames graced the party with their presence. They were all, out hawking with the King and the Duchess of Portsmouth in the Home Park.

Pleasant it was to watch the cavalcade as it proceeded at a slow pace with the hounds, which were held in leash, to a covert on the further side of the plain.

Here a noble hart was quickly unharboured. Horns were blown, hounds unslipped, and, amid joyous exclamations, the chase speedily commenced.

"Hark, Kingwood!—hark, Rupert!" shouted the Duke of York, cheering on the pack as the hart flew swiftly across the plain, in the direction of a thicket on the heights about two miles off, and known as Hawk's Hill Wood.

Once within the thicket, the hart was safe for a short time; but being at last driven out, he dashed down a long, sweeping glade, bordered on either side by magnificent trees.

Nothing could be more animating than the chase at this moment. The stag was in full view—the hounds were speeding after him, making the woods ring with their melody—and the whole splendid cavalcade was galloping on at the top of their speed.

At the head of the group rode the Duke of York; and close behind him came Buckingham and Bellegarde, both looking as full of excitement as the Prince himself.

But the hart ran very fleetly, and soon began to outstrip his pursuers. At first, they thought he was making for the Great Lake, which lay amid the woods on the right, and in the immediate neighbourhood of which the ground was marshy and extremely dangerous; but, fortunately, he turned off in a different direction, and led them into a more open part of the forest.

Here the country was beautifully undulating—rising into gentle knolls crowned with trees, or dipping into dells, and everywhere offering charming sylvan prospects; but the huntsmen, as may be supposed, thought only of the stag; and as long as they kept him in view, cared for little else.

They had ridden on in this way for two or three miles, and were close upon the confines of Ascot Heath, whither it seemed certain that the hart would take them, when the Duke of Buckingham's charger fell suddenly lame, and prevented him from going on with the hunt.

Bellegarde had no time to express his regret at the accident; but he was not without concern for the Duke, as he galloped off with the chase.

Buckingham found, nevertheless, that his horse had sustained no injury, and, hoping to reach the Count before the poor animal became dead, immediately turned back on.

Naturally, taking the shortest route; and as more than a mile would be saved by passing through the woods that surrounded the Great

Lake, he plunged into them, being tolerably well acquainted with their intricacies.

It has already been stated that, in the immediate vicinity of the lake, there was a dangerous swamp. On issuing from the thicket, the Duke came upon this marsh, which did not betray itself in appearance from the solid ground.

No sooner did the unfortunate animal set foot upon the treacherous surface than he was engulfed, and, while floundering about, sank deeper and deeper.

With great difficulty, the Duke extricated himself from his perilous position, but he could not save his horse. In a few minutes, the doomed animal, which continued to struggle violently to the last, disappeared altogether.

II.

IN WHAT MANNER BUCKINGHAM ENCOUNTERED CLAUDE DUVAL.

BUCKINGHAM was standing on the bank of the lake, rooted to the spot, in a kind of stupor, when he heard sounds in the wood that convinced him that horsemen were at hand, and, naturally concluding they must belong to the chase, he called out loudly.

His cry evoked a person who astonished him as much as if the wild huntsman, who once haunted the shores of that gloomy mere, had suddenly appeared before him on his sable steed, and attended by his swart hounds.

A masked horseman, wrapped in a long, black cloak, burst from the wood, and drew up at a little distance from him. The Duke knew at once that it must be Claude Duval.

The redoubted robber was not alone, but was attended only by a stripling, who was masked like himself, and equally well mounted. The figure of this youth, well-defined in a picturesque green velvet riding-dress, was of almost feminine lightness and symmetry.

The graceful squire kept close behind his master.

Removing his feathered hat, Duval courteously saluted the Duke. Buckingham haughtily returned the salutation.

"The devil, whom you serve, and who has lent you a helping hand, by first laming my horse, and then stifling him in this cursed quagmire, must have brought you hither!" he cried; "you could not otherwise have discovered me."

"Pardon me," rejoined Duval, with the marked and peculiar Gascon accent by which his speech was ever characterized; "I did not derive my information from the source you

suppose. I am really concerned to find your Grace in this unpleasant predicament, because you may think I am taking an unfair advantage of you."

"No matter what I think," said Buckingham. "You are armed, and on horseback; I am on foot, and without pistols; so there is nothing for it but submission on my part."

"I am glad to find your Grace so complaisant," replied Duval; "I was rather apprehensive, from some remarks that have been repeated to me, that I might have been obliged to—"

"No more," interrupted the Duke, impatiently. "Here is my purse."

"Well filled, I hope!"

"It ought to contain two hundred pistoles, which I won last night at piquette from the Count de Bellegarde. If the amount is not exact, you must blame the Count, not me."

"The Count de Bellegarde is a man of honour," said Duval. "Tis a paltry sum, but the amount is immaterial. What is important, is the fame that will accrue to me from this encounter with your Grace."

At a sign from his master, the youthful squire then rode up, and, with a graceful bow, took the purse from the Duke.

"By my faith, a pretty page!" exclaimed Buckingham, struck by the youth's manner.

"I had counted upon the pleasure of hearing your Grace's celebrated ballad," observed Duval; "but, under the circumstances, I will not press you to sing it. However, you will now be able to add the final couplet."

"The laugh is decidedly against me," said the Duke. "But you ought to give me my revenge."

"Pardieu! I am quite ready to do so—in any way your Grace may desire," rejoined Duval.

"Accord me another meeting."

"Your Grace does me infinite honour. I shall be charmed."

"Do not misunderstand me. This must be a hostile meeting. I shall come to it armed."

"*Tout vaque!*" "Tis not my fault that you are unarmed at the present moment. If perfectly agreeable to your Grace, we will meet, three nights hence, at midnight, on Grand-becque Chase. Your Grace shall be at liberty to bring a partner with you—say Mr. Talbot Harland. I will only bring with me my faithful squire, Léon. But I engage—*foi de Duval!*—that he shall offer no interference whatever. You hear, Léon?"

The youthful squire bowed assent.

"I agree!" cried Buckingham. "On the third night hence—at midnight—I shall look for you on Cranbourne Chase. I will bring with me Mr. Talbot Harland, and will bind him to secrecy."

"I have one condition to make," said Duval.

"Name it," rejoined the Duke.

"If I fall, you will not remove my mask."

"I will not—I swear it!" cried Buckingham.

Here Léon made a movement towards his master; but Duval motioned him back.

"Your Grace will aid the poor boy to carry off my body?" he cried.

"Rest easy: your wish shall be fulfilled," rejoined Buckingham. "What is more, I promise to defer the final couplet of my ballad till after the next meeting."

"In that case, you may never have an opportunity of finishing it," said Duval. "I have the honour to salute your Grace."

Next moment, Buckingham was left alone by the side of the lake.

III.

LEON REMOVES HIS MASK.

CLAUDE DUVAL had reached the centre of the thicket, when his course being impeded by underwood, he came to a halt, and perceived that Léon was weeping.

Now that the squire's mask was removed, it could be seen that the features it had hidden were those of an extraordinarily beautiful young woman.

We have already seen that charming face, under more than one aspect.

"In tears, *mignonne*!" exclaimed Duval. "Don't dim those bright eyes. I thought you were laughing at the successful issue of my encounter with Buckingham."

"I can only think of the hostile meeting you have appointed with him," she replied. "I hope it may not prove fatal to you. I have a presentiment of ill."

"Fatal! Ha! ha!" he cried. "Why, I have fought twenty duels, and mean to fight as many more. Buckingham will not harm me, *mignonne*. If you allow yourself to feel any uneasiness, it ought to be for him."

"You don't mean to kill him?" she cried, anxiously.

"*Ma foi, non!* But since he has provoked me to the combat, I shall give him cause to remember it. He shall not boast too loudly of his duel with Claude Duval."

"All you say doesn't cheer me," she rejoined sadly. "What will happen to me if you fall?"

"You must find another lover, I suppose. But I don't contemplate such a catastrophe."

"You seemed to contemplate it just now."

"Pshaw! that was nothing. One must mention such things."

"You are never serious; but it is a serious matter to me. I wish you wouldn't meet the Duke."

"I should deserve to forfeit your love if I complied with the request. I cannot retreat. After I have settled this little affair, we will go to Paris."

"Oh, that will be delightful!" she exclaimed, brightening up at the idea. "But you have talked so often of taking me to Paris, that you must excuse me if I still doubt."

"I will fulfil my promise now, little sceptic," he cried. "To confess the truth, I am tired of my follies. There must be an end of them some time. I meant the encounter I have just had with Buckingham to be the last. But he has forced me into a duel, and I cannot avoid meeting him."

"Why not? He knows you only as Claude Duval."

"What matter? Claude Duval has his honour to maintain, as well as the Count de Bellegarde. Buckingham shall not come off with flying colours. The final couplet of his ballad shall be descriptive of his own defeat."

"Heaven grant it may be so!" ejaculated Sabine, fervently.

"Courage, *ma mie*!" he exclaimed, in a voice calculated to banish her apprehensions. "All will be well, rely on it. You will soon see Paris, delicious St. Cloud, and superb Versailles. Meanwhile, let us pass the time merrily. Banish care. I will explain my plans to you as soon as I have definitively arranged them; but whatever I may do, you must not leave Windsor Castle till the evening of the duel."

"Command, and I will obey," she rejoined.

"I have no more orders to give just now. Neither must we linger here. Hie! there is some one among the trees. 'Tis Buckingham. I'll be sworn. Let us haste to the forester's hut, where I have left my steed, where I can change my attire and my peruke, and do all that is necessary for my re-appearance in my proper character. Adieu, *mon ami Duval*! Soyez le bienvenu, Monsieur le Comte de Bellegarde!"

And laughing gaily, he forced his way through the wood, followed by Sabine.

IV.

BUCKINGHAM'S PURSE IS RESTORED BY BELLEGARDE.

HAVING no alternative but to proceed to the Castle on foot, and not choosing to trust himself to the marshy ground near the lake, Buckingham struck into the wood.

But ill luck seemed to attend him. He lost his way, and for more than an hour was involved in the thicket.

As he ascended the long glade leading to the summit of Sion Hill, he looked about in every direction for his companions of the chase, but could see nothing of them.

At length, the trampling of a horse caught his ears, and, turning at the sound, he perceived the Count de Bellegarde galloping towards him.

The Count naturally expressed surprise to find the Duke on foot, and on hearing what had happened, immediately dismounted, and offered his own horse to his Grace. Buckingham, however, declined the obliging offer, and, soon afterwards, was accommodated with a horse by a huntsman who came up. His Grace described the accident that had befallen him in the quagmire near the lake, but said nothing about his encounter with Claude Duval.

If any suspicions as to the possibility of the Count having personated the gallant robber had crossed him, they were now entirely dispelled.

Bellegarde, by his own account, had seen the stag killed on Ascot Heath, and had hunted a second hart with the Duke of York, when, having had enough, or for some other reason, he quitted the chase.

"Where his Highness has got to, heaven knows," he cried. "But I think the hart he is now hunting will take him to Bagshot Heath—perhaps to Reading."

"I thought you were never fatigued, Count," observed Buckingham.

"Rarely," he replied. "Nor must your Grace imagine I am fatigued now. But I have some preparations to make."

"Preparations for what?" asked the Duke, curiously.

"For my journey to Paris. I am going thither to-morrow."

"Going to Paris to-morrow!" cried Buckingham, in surprise. "I need not say how sorry I shall be to lose you. Have you announced your departure to his Majesty? I am sure he will be grieved."

"I have said nothing about it as yet. In fact, it was only yesterday that I received an order from the Duke of Orleans, summoning me to St. Cloud. I am strongly inclined to disobey the mandate, but I dare not."

"No; you must go," cried Buckingham. "But come back soon, or the Duchess of Portsmouth will break her heart. During your exile from Court she was inconsolable."

"You flatter me. But I am not quite so necessary to my fair cousin's happiness as your Grace imagines. She will soon reconcile herself to my absence."

The foregoing conversation occurred in the Long Walk, at that time bordered by double rows of young trees, planted by Charles, to whom we are indebted for the present magnificent avenue to the Castle.

As the interlocutors approached the regal pile, they met the hawking party, with the King and the Duchess of Portsmouth at its head, returning from the Home Park.

His Majesty halted, to talk to them; and noticing the sorry steed on which Buckingham was mounted, inquired whether any accident had happened to him in the chase.

The Duke described how he had lost his charger in the marsh, near the lake, and Charles was expressing regret at the occurrence, when a singular smile on Bellegarde's countenance caught his attention. He asked the Count why he laughed.

"Not at the Duke's misfortune, your Majesty may be quite sure," replied Bellegarde. "I smile because his Grace has omitted the best part of the story. I have been wondering whether he would relate it."

"Ah! what is it?" said the King, to Buckingham.

"Faith, sire, I have not the least idea," rejoined the Duke, evasively.

"Then I must tell it myself," observed Bellegarde. "If any of the details are incorrect, his Grace will set me right."

These preliminary observations caused Dorinda Neville and several other fair equestrians to press forward; and a little circle was formed round the Count, everybody being curious to hear his narration.

"I had quitted the chase at Ascot Heath," commenced Bellegarde, in the lively manner that peculiarly belonged to him; "and had just entered the wood that bounds the Great Park, when I observed two persons galloping along a glade."

"I ought to mention that I was alone at the time. Thinking the persons I beheld

were hastening to join the chase, I halloed to them, and they instantly stopped. I then saw the mistake I had committed. Both were masked."

"Oddsfish! I'll wager this is another story of Claude Duval!" exclaimed the King.

"Both were masked, as I have said," pursued Bellegarde; "and this circumstance roused my suspicions—or, rather, I should say, convinced me that one of them was the audacious rascal whom your Majesty has just mentioned. He was as finely dressed as any of your train, and attended by a youthful squire."

"Well, they both rode towards me. Not expecting such an encounter in the park, and being unarmed, while I remarked that Duval had pistols in his holsters, my first impulse was to gallop off; but having very little to lose, I remained stationary."

"As Duval came up, he bowed very politely, and, of course, I returned the salute. 'Bon jour, Monsieur Duval,' I cried. 'I am rather surprised to see you here in his Majesty's park in broad daylight.'

"I don't know why you should express surprise at seeing me, Monsieur le Comte," he rejoined. "You are aware of my intention to rob his Grace of Buckingham. I have waited for an opportunity, and it has at last presented itself. Only a few minutes since I succeeded in my design."

"What!" I exclaimed in amazement. "Have you really dared to rob the Duke?" "My master has just taken this from him," said the squire, exhibiting a purse to my view. "And did his Grace offer no resistance?" I asked. "I had him at a disadvantage," replied Duval. "He was unhorsed, and without arms."

"The rascal spoke truth," remarked Buckingham. "I had just lost my horse in a quagmire. But proceed, Count."

"I hope I shall not offend your Grace by what I am now about to mention, but I could not help asking the rascal whether you had favoured him with your ballad. 'I want an explicit answer,' I said; 'because I have a wager depending upon the point.' 'Had he been on horseback,' rejoined Duval, 'I would have compelled the Duke to sing it, but under the circumstances, I excused him.'"

The Count was here interrupted by loud laughter from the King, in which the Duchesse of Portsmouth, and all those around, joined.

"What more have you to tell?" asked Buckingham, rather angrily.

"Not much," replied the Count. "Fancying the rascal meant to rob me next, I was pre-

paring to empty my pockets, but he stopped me. 'Monsieur le Comte,' he said, 'I have simply a favour to ask of you. I am persuaded you will not refuse it. Oblige me by restoring the purse to the Duke of Buckingham.' 'With much pleasure,' I replied. 'I cannot sufficiently applaud your conduct, but permit me to observe that it is somewhat inconsistent with your character.' 'I perceive, Count, that you understand very little about my character,' he rejoined.

"He then signed to his squire, who handed me the purse. 'No need of explanation,' cried Duval. 'His Grace will perfectly comprehend why I cannot keep it.' Without a word more, he and his squire galloped off, leaving me in a complete state of bewilderment. As requested, I now restore the purse to your Grace."

And taking it from his pocket, he delivered it to Buckingham, amid general laughter.

"How comes it that you did not mention this incident to me before?" demanded the Duke.

"I am sure your Grace will forgive me when I say that I purposely reserved it for his Majesty's amusement," replied the Count.

"I would not have lost it for the world," cried Charles.

He had not ceased laughing as he passed through the gates of the Castle.

V.

THE DUKE OF ORMOND IS AVENGED BY HIS SON.

BLOOD was not amongst the King's retinue at Windsor Castle. His duties detained him at Whitehall.

Of late, he had become sullen and morose, and begun once more to rail bitterly against the Duke of Ormond, hinting darkly at some fresh design that he had conceived, of which his Grace was to be the victim; but his followers urged him to abandon it, and told him frankly they would have no hand in it. Be his project what it might, it was never consummated. The hour of retribution was at hand.

Montalt had paid several secret visits to the Tower, and on most of these occasions he had enjoyed an evening walk on the ramparts with Edith.

For some reason, however, for which he could not account, the fickle damsel began to cool in her manner towards him, and at last told him, in plain terms, that she could meet him no more.

Distracted by this heartless determination,

Montalt flew into transports of jealous rage; and, convinced that he had been supplanted, swore with a tremendous oath that he would find his rival out and slay him.

The malicious little coquette laughed at his passion, and frankly admitted that he was right in his conjecture; but she added, with a peculiarly arch smile, that his rival was quite out of his reach.

This was enough for Montalt. Seeing in a moment how matters stood, he became as humble as he had just been violent.

Edith liked him much better in this mood; and being softened by his humility, consented that their intimacy should not wholly cease. She even agreed to meet him next day in St. James's Park.

"To-morrow afternoon," she said, with a captivating look, "I shall take an airing with my mother on the Mall. Most likely we shall ramble on to the long canal; and if you should happen to be there at the time, I shall not be very much offended if you join us."

"A thousand thanks for the permission!" cried Montalt, kissing her hand rapturously. "I have acted very foolishly; but I will behave better in future. There are some rivals with whom it would be absurd to compete. I am content to wait."

"With such a disposition, there may, possibly, be a chance for you," said Edith. "But mind, you must not come again to the Tower."

"Not till you invite me," he replied.

Each afternoon, Blood walked with his followers in St. James's Park. His insolent deportment on the Mall, and the defiant glances he cast around, provoked many an indignant remark; but the favour he enjoyed at Court, and his own evil reputation, generally secured him from insult in return.

On the afternoon on which Montalt hoped to meet the bewitching coquette, Blood walked forth as usual. Those who encountered him on the Mall, and knew him, remarked that his manner was fiercer than usual. He scowled angrily when regarded too closely, and would have picked a quarrel, if any one had been willing to humour his inclinations.

Montalt had not informed him of his appointment, and being anxious to get away, was seeking for an excuse, when the Colonel quitted the Mall, and took the direction of the long canal.

Seated on a bench opposite the Deocy, they discovered Edith and her mother. The golden-haired damsel was very becomingly dressed, and looked remarkably well. Between her

and her mother sat a plainly-attired, middle-aged person, of very quiet manner, who was no other than the King's confidential valet, Chiffinch.

Whatever proposal Chiffinch was making to the enchantress, seemed to be very favourably entertained—at least, Montalt thought so. Her eyes sparkled, and her cheeks flushed, as she listened to the words of the tempter.

All this was quite as intelligible to Blood as to Montalt, and occasioned him no surprise; but it immediately suggested the course that ought to be pursued. No time ought to be lost in paying court to the new royal favourite.

Changing his manner with marvellous celerity, and calling up his most insinuating smiles, he made his bow, and paid her some high-flown compliments.

Chiffinch, having risen at his approach, he at once took the place vacated by the valet, and dividing his attention between mother and daughter, succeeded in pleasing both.

Having accomplished his object, he surrendered his seat to Montalt, who he saw was dying to obtain it; and taking Chiffinch apart, held a brief conference with him. For what he then learnt, he congratulated himself on his discernment.

Proposing to return presently to the ladies, he quitted Chiffinch, and walked on with Flodoard and Mundeville by the side of the canal.

He had not gone far, when two very distinguished personages were seen approaching from the opposite direction.

Both were richly attired, their bearing lofty, while the strong personal resemblance between them, coupled with the difference of age, proclaimed them to be father and son. Such, in fact, was their relationship. They were the Duke of Ormond and his son, the Earl of Ossory.

Blood knew them at once; and the sight of the Duke of Ormond rekindled in an instant all his smouldering hate. His hand involuntarily sought his sword.

On his side, Ormond had recognised his intended assassin, and the Earl of Ossory had made the same discovery; but they would have passed him with dignified scorn, had not Blood, as if possessed by madness, planted himself in the Duke's path.

"Again we meet, but not for the last time," cried the frantic miscreant, shaking his clenched hand at him. "I shall yet hang you at Tyburn."

Disdaining to make any answer, Ormond

seized his son's arm, who was about to chastise the insolent ruffian, and forced him away.

Astounded at Blood's insane conduct, his followers dragged him off.

But the affair was not destined to end thus.

Ossory had not gone far, when, foaming with rage, he broke from his father.

"Leave the law to punish him," cried Ormond.

"The law!" exclaimed his son. "There is no law in England, when robbers and assassins can stalk abroad thus. I will punish him myself."

Disregarding the Duke's entreaties, he ran after Blood, who, hearing his footsteps and shouts, likewise burst from his followers, and faced him.

"Cut-throat and robber!" cried the young noble; "I will not sully my steel with the blood of a wretch so vile, but thy insolence shall not pass unpunished."

With his cane he struck Blood several severe blows on the head and shoulders, knocking off his hat and peruke.

Staggered for a moment by the attack, Blood presently recovered, and with a roar like that of an enraged lion, plucked forth his rapier, and made a desperate lunge at Ossory.

The gallant young noble saved himself by leaping backwards, and then flinging away his cane, drew, and engaged his furious adversary.

Blood was a consummate master of fence, and possessed immense strength of wrist, but blinded by rage, he fought wildly.

After the exchange of a few rapid passes, he made a deadly thrust, which Ossory dexterously parried, and returning it with the rapidity of lightning, his point passed through his adversary's heart, the sword-hilt striking against his breast.

Blood fell into the arms of his followers, who had kept aloof during the fray, but now flew towards him.

He almost instantly expired.

His last vindictive look was fixed on the Duke of Ormond, who had hurried to the spot, and witnessed the tragical close of the conflict.

VI.

THE LAST INTERVIEW BETWEEN THE COUNT DE BELLEGARDE AND THE DUCHESS OF PORTSMOUTH.

The gaiety of the Court was somewhat damped by the announcement made by the Count de Bellegarde of his immediate departure for Paris.

The King was sorry to lose him, and did not know how to supply his place. No one possessed such unfailing good spirits as the Count—no one was so pleasant a companion—no one related such diverting stories. The loss of his society was, therefore, a real deprivation to his Majesty.

But if Charles was grieved, the Duchess of Portsmouth—as Buckingham had foreseen—was in despair. To her, Achille was indispensable. He was her confidante and counsellor—not, perhaps, the wisest and best; but at any rate, she consulted and trusted him.

She sent for him to her boudoir, to talk to him privately, and try to dissuade him from going; but all her efforts were fruitless.

"You have some motive that you do not care to avow for your sudden departure," she said, angry that he would not yield to her importunities.

"You are right, sweet cousin. I know you won't betray me. 'Tis absolutely necessary for me to leave the country for a short time."

"What have you done?" she said, looking at him fixedly.

"Nothing very dreadful," he replied, with a smile.

"Have you lost money? If so, I will assist you. I know you have been unlucky at play lately."

"True! The jade Fortune has turned her back on me latterly, but I don't want funds."

"Can I relieve you from any other embarrassment? You may command all my influence with the King."

"I know it, sweet cousin. But this is an affair—however, I cannot explain," he said, stopping short.

"I feel very much disposed to prevent your departure, Achille," she observed, shaking her head. "A word to his Majesty will do it."

"You will throw no obstacles in my way, I am sure, Louise, when I tell you that my honour is concerned in the affair. Question no more, if you love me. I promise to return without delay, if I can. Should you not hear from me within a week, conclude—"

"Conclude what, Achille?"

"That I cannot write," he rejoined, gravely.

"You alarm me. You are bound on some mad enterprise. You shall not go."

"I must, Louise. If we meet no more, cherish the memory of the cousin whom you loved, in spite of his follies."

"Achille, this is serious! I must have an explanation. You know how attached I am to you."



THE FATAL DUPEL. (See page 104.)

"I require no assurance of your regard, Louisa. Will it surprise you to learn that I am tired of life?"

"You tired of life, Achille? Impossible! I hope you do not meditate any painful act?"

"I will never raise my hand against myself. Be sure of that."

"But do not throw your life away."

He was silent for a moment, and then said, with deep but suppressed emotion,—

"If anything should happen to me, a letter will be delivered to you. By all the love you have ever borne me, I implore you to fulfil my last request."

"I will—I promise it solemnly."

He pressed her hand gratefully, and was again silent for some moments.

Rousing himself at last by a powerful effort, he cried,—

"Before I go, I should like to do a good turn to Talbot Harland."

"This is very generous of you, Achille. I have always looked upon you as Talbot's rival. You know how I took you to task formerly for your attentions to Dorinda Neville."

"There is no longer any rivalry between us. Besides, Dorinda only pretended to encourage me, in order to plague Talbot, as I soon discovered. But I like them both, and it would give me real pleasure to be instrumental in bringing about their union. You can easily accomplish it, if you are so disposed."

"I think the matter is pretty nearly settled," replied the Duchess, with a smile. "The question, I fancy, was put at the hawking-party, this morning; and, judging by Talbot's looks, he was not reduced to absolute despair by the answer he received. I have not yet spoken to Dorinda on the subject; but I will let you know her decision at the ball this evening. You will attend it?"

"Of course," he replied. "My preparations are nearly made."

"Ah, Achille!" she exclaimed, "if we should never meet again after to-night, I shall often think of you."

"You have made me easy by the promise you have given me, and which I know you will keep religiously. My fate may be a mystery to all the world; to you it will be none. You will learn the secret."

He kissed her hand respectfully, and retired, leaving her full of gloomy apprehension.

VII.

DORINDA'S PORTION.

THROWN decidedly out of spirits, the Duchess of Portsmouth was present at the grand banquet in St. George's Hall, and afterwards at the brilliant ball given in the magnificent dancing-saloon.

Before his Majesty sat down to the banquet, Chiffinch arrived at the Castle, and gave him details of Blood's death by the hand of the Earl of Ossory.

Charles was not painfully affected by the news, and perhaps thought himself well rid of an attendant whom he had already begun to find troublesome. But his valet had some other intelligence respecting a certain golden-haired damsel, that unquestionably delighted him.

Whatever Bellegarde might have felt on hearing of Blood's death, he manifested no outward emotion. The Duchess of Portsmouth, who knew he was playing a part, wondered how he could get through it so well. To see him in the dance, or watch him in the card-room among the punters at basnet, one would have thought him the gayest of the gay.

Early in the evening, he had encountered Talbot Harland in the ball-room, and ascertained from him that, contrary to the Duchess of Portsmouth's impression, Dorinda's answer had not been given, the fair damsel declaring that the King's consent must first be obtained.

"Have you spoken to his Majesty?" inquired the Count.

"Not yet," replied the other.

"Well, that point shall soon be settled. Engage Lady Munkerry for the first country-dance, and as soon as it is over, take her ladyship to the Duchess of Portsmouth, whom you will find with his Majesty in the small saloon. Leave the rest to me. I am sure that the result shall be perfectly satisfactory to you."

Thanking the Count warmly, Talbot immediately went in search of Lady Munkerry, who did not require to be asked twice. Half the company stood up on the occasion, and amongst the dancers was Dorinda, her partner being the Count de Bellegarde.

The dance seemed interminable to Talbot; but when it was over, in accordance with his instructions, he led her ladyship, who was full of excitement and delight, to the small saloon.

There they found the Duchess of Portsmouth and the King, no one being with them except the Duke of Buckingham.

They had only just made reverence; when

Dorinda entered the saloon, attended by the Count de Bellegarde.

As the fair damsel drew near, the Duchess of Portsmouth stepped forward to meet her, and led her towards the King, who arose at her approach.

Seeing that Dorinda was in some confusion, Charles said, in the most gracious tones imaginable, "The Duchess tells me you have a little request to make."

"Pardon me, my liege," she replied, blushing deeply; "I have nothing whatever to ask of your Majesty."

"Do not mind what she says, sire," observed the Duchess. "She has a favour to ask."

"Oddfish! I will spare her blushes," cried the good-natured monarch. "You desire my consent to your marriage with a very worthy young gentleman, whom I see before me. You have it. Approach, sir," he added to Talbot, who delightedly obeyed the mandate.

"Take her," pursued the King, placing her hand in that of the young man. "May your union be crowned with happiness!"

They knelt before him at the words, and Talbot fluted out his gratitude.

"I have not done," continued Charles, raising Dorinda graciously. "Your bride," he added to Talbot—"and no man ever won a lovelier bride—will have a portion of ten thousand pounds."

"Oh, sire! this is too much!" exclaimed Dorinda.

"Your husband will not think it so," observed Charles, laughing. "I hope the marriage has your ladyship's approval?" he added, playfully, to Lady Muskerrey.

"It is sufficient for me that it has received your Majesty's sanction," she replied. "Without that, it would never have received mine."

"You cannot do better than follow my example in everything," observed Charles, significantly.

"Such is my intention, sire," she returned. "And I will therefore add another ten thousand pounds to the marriage portion which you have bestowed on Dorinda."

"Just what I expected from your ladyship!" cried the King, approvingly.

Here the Duchess of Portsmouth embraced Dorinda; and kissing her on both cheeks, offered her her warmest congratulations. "I congratulate you also," she added to Talbot.

"How much I am indebted to your Grace!" cried the young man, earnestly.

"You are more indebted to the Count de Bellegarde than you are to me," she replied.

"I can accept no thanks, for I do not deserve them," said the Count. "But I wish you all possible happiness, and I am sure you will have it."

Dorinda, as may well be supposed, did not return to the ball-room. Indeed, she was much overcome; and after reiterating the expressions of her gratitude to his Majesty and the Duchess, she retired with her aunt.

Talbot, however, was in too joyous a mood to quit the festive scene; and the Count de Bellegarde betook himself to the card-room, where he won some money.

He was among the punters at the basset-table, when he heard the Duke of Buckingham talking to Talbot Harland. The Duke spoke in a low voice; but by slightly shifting his position, he caught what was said.

"I have a little affair on hand, at which I want your company," observed Buckingham. "It is not an ordinary duel, so you need have no scruples at disobeying his Majesty. You are only required to see fair play."

"If that is all, your Grace may command me," replied Talbot. "I would not for the world offend his Majesty after his great generosity to me. When does the meeting take place?"

"On the third night from this, on Cranbourne Chase, at midnight," replied Buckingham.

"On Cranbourne Chase at midnight!" exclaimed Talbot, surprised, and half repenting the promise he had given. "'Tis a mysterious meeting, indeed."

"No more now," said the Duke. "I will tell you all about it to-morrow."

"He will come," thought Bellegarde.

VIII.

ON CRANBOURNE CHASE AT MIDNIGHT.

THE Count de Bellegarde had taken his departure from Windsor Castle, leaving behind him a blank that could not be easily filled up.

He did not trust himself to another private interview with the Duchess of Portsmouth, though she desired it; but sent his excuses.

On taking leave of the King, he said, with a surprisingly grave countenance, "I fear I must bid your Majesty a lasting adieu."

"Why so?" asked Charles.

"I have some idea of shutting myself up in the Monastery of La Trappe."

"To practice penitence for your past life, ha!" cried Charles. "You have much to repent, no doubt. But think twice before you turn monk. Devote discipline won't suit you."

my friend. There is no joking, believe me, in those gloomy cells."

"It will be a change. If your Majesty does not see me again within a month, you may be sure that I have turned Trappist."

"Heaven forbid! But should such a dreadful misfortune happen, may you rise to be an abbot. Farewell, most holy father! Come back soon to give me your benediction."

Charles thought the Count was jesting; but he afterwards viewed the matter in a very different light.

The appointed night arrived.

A night well fitted for such a meeting—bright and calm. Fleecy clouds covered the sky, and a full moon poured down its radiance upon the towers of the Castle, and silvered the pompous woods of the Great Park.

Although it wanted nearly an hour to midnight, Claude Duval and his squire were riding slowly and silently towards the place of rendezvous. They had come from the forester's hut, and had trucked a narrow road that led through the thick woods then clothing the summit of Snow Hill.

From this eminence, the view of Windsor Castle is superb; and on such a lovely, moon-light night as we have described, the beauty of the scene was enhanced.

On issuing from the sombre thicket, Duval halted to gaze on the splendid prospect spread out before him. His eye ranged over the rich woodland tract, and rested long on the grand pile towering in the distance.

What thoughts occupied his mind at the time, we shall not inquire. Folding his hands upon his breast, he fell into a profound reverie, from which he was at last aroused by Sabine.

"Why do you look so scared?" he asked.

"I have just seen my father," she rejoined.

The answer startled him,

"Seen your father?" he exclaimed.

"Yes; I saw him standing yonder, beside the wood. I saw him as plainly as I behold you now. Death-pale his countenance, and its expression very mournful.

"Fear made me dumb, or I should have called out to you. He pointed to the wood, near the lake, and beckoned me to follow. Then I missed him."

"After this warning, will you go on to meet certain destruction?"

"If I am doomed, I am doomed," rejoined Duval, shrugging his shoulders. "Your superstitious fears, and nothing else, conjured up this phantom."

Though he said this in an incredulous tone, he

was evidently impressed, for he presently remarked, "I have something to add to the instructions I have already given you. Here is a letter, which you must deliver to the Duchess of Portsmouth. She has promised me, solemnly, to attend to my request. She will be your friend."

"I shall want no friend if I lose you," she cried, in a despairing voice.

"Do as I enjoin you," he said, authoritatively.

"Oh, if my fears are realized, I shall die!" she exclaimed.

"Sabine, cast off this weakness, and be yourself! You will unman me, and my honour is at stake!"

"You shall not hear another murmur," she rejoined, submissively.

They rode down the woody slopes, and startled a herd of deer couched beneath the oaks at the foot of the acclivity.

As he cantered across the broad plain, Duval, with characteristic levity, began to hum a light French romance. His companion made no remark, though her heart was like to break.

A distant bell tolled the hour of midnight. At the same instant, as if summoned by the strokes, two horsemen appeared on the part of the chase that was nearest the Castle.

"Yonder they are!" cried Duval, almost joyously.

"I see them," she replied, with a shudder.

"Have you ought further to say to me?"

"Only to bid you adieu, in case of the worst," he replied.

She pressed the hand he extended to her lips, and her tears fell on it.

"You are forgetting your promise," he cried.

Having adjusted his mask, he galloped towards his adversary, who, with his second, was now riding quickly to meet him.

As he galloped on, Duval resumed his romance, and sung it so loud and blithely, that it reached the ears of his antagonist.

"Hark! he is singing," observed the Duke to Talbot Harland, who was riding by his side. "'Tis almost a pity to kill so gay a galliard."

"I hope it may not be needful to kill him," replied Talbot.

Presently, Duval changed his melody, and began to sing a couplet of the Duke's famous ballad.

"Does your Grace hear that?" cried Talbot, laughing.

"Ay," replied the Duke. "I like his humour amazingly."

When within fifty yards of each other, the adversaries drew in the rein, advancing at a foot's pace, till they met.

Duval then uncovered, and bowed gracefully to the Duke, who returned the salutation with lofty courtesy.

Throughout the conversation that ensued, Duval spoke with the peculiar Gascon accent that he occasionally assumed.

"Your servant, Mr. Talbot," he said, bowing to him. "'Tis not the first time we have met."

"But it will probably be the last," rejoined Talbot, gravely.

"Perhaps so," said Duval, in a careless tone. "To business!"

"Before proceeding, I have an observation to make," said Talbot.

"I am all attention," replied Duval, bowing politely.

"His Grace the Duke of Buckingham is here, ready to fulfil his engagement," pursued Talbot. "But I have to state, on his Grace's part, that, as he has no real animosity towards you, and as he has, however, reason to believe that your exploits have been intended as practical jests, he is willing to forego the combat, provided you will make an admission to that effect."

"I will make the admission for him," cried the squire, pressing eagerly forward. "All his exploits were practical jests—all!"

"Back, Léon!" cried Duval. "Pardon this interruption, Mr. Harland," he continued, as the squire dejectedly retired. "Have you more to add?"

"Only one thing, to which I trust you will see no objection," replied Talbot. "The Duke will require you to unmask."

"Unmask? Ha!" cried Duval, sharply. "His Grace has no right to make any such demand. With his first requisition I might have complied. Indeed, I will admit that all the feats which he has done me the honour to record in his matchless ballad were practical jests."

"I am very glad to hear it," said Talbot. "After this frank admission——"

"Hear me out!" cried Duval. "I peremptorily refuse to unmask. This discussion is idle, and must cease. The Duke of Buckingham has challenged me, and now he seeks to avoid the combat. I insist upon its taking place."

"I avoid the combat!" exclaimed Bucking-

ham, with a disdainful laugh. "By St. George, that shall never be said!"

A half-stifled cry burst from the squire, but it passed unheeded.

"Are you prepared?" demanded Talbot, as each adversary drew a pistol from his holster.

"Prepared!" they responded, as with one voice.

"Ride off in opposite directions till I bid you stop. Return slowly, and fire when I give the word."

The injunction was obeyed. Each rode slowly off, till Talbot called out "Stop!" and then turned back.

Not till they were within thirty yards of each other was the signal given.

Both fired together.

Duval discharged his pistol in the air, but the Duke took deadly aim. The bullet lodged in his adversary's breast.

Duval uttered a cry, and fell back slightly; but he almost instantly recovered himself. With a wild shriek that betrayed her sex, Sabine flew towards him.

At the same time, Talbot and the Duke pressed forward, eager to render aid.

"Off!" she cried, fiercely, and presenting a pistol at them as she spoke.

"He shall not be unmasked while I have life. Your Grace will not break your plighted word!"

"No," replied the Duke, drawing back, while Talbot followed his example.

"I am mortally hurt, but have enough strength left for flight," growled Duval. "Keep close beside me."

"Fear no pursuit from us," cried Buckingham.

The Duke and Talbot watched them as they flew with lightning swiftness across the plain. Each moment the lookers-on expected to see the wounded man drop from the saddle. But, to their infinite surprise, he held on. He mounted the sides of Snow Hill, and disappeared with his companion in the wood on its brow.

"He will die in the thicket," observed Buckingham.

But the Duke was mistaken. Duval still clung to the saddle.

"Oh, that we could reach the hut!" exclaimed Sabine.

"Not there," rejoined Duval. "Your father's spirit pointed towards the lake. Take me thither—to the morass—you understand," he significantly replied.

She divined his terrible purpose, but did not attempt to oppose it. She led him down the

long sweeping glade, along which they fitted like phantoms.

She guided him, swiftly and unerringly, through the thick woods encircling the lake, and brought him to the borders of the morass.

"Now leave me. Farewell for ever!" he cried.

And with a last effort, he forced his horse into the fatal swamp.

Sabine remained looking on in a state of stupefaction.

When all was over, she prepared to follow.

"Leave you! Never!" she exclaimed. "I am yours in life, as in death!"

And she plunged in after him.

The morass willingly offered them a grave in its oozy depths, and kept their secret well.

A miserable pretender afterwards appeared as Claude Duval. With him we have nothing to do. He was very deservedly hanged.

The Count de Bellegarde appeared no more at Whitehall; and the King, though amazed at his folly, never doubted that he had become a monk of La Trappe.

THE GOLDSMITH'S WIFE.

A NOVEL.



CAXTON DISPLAYS HIS SKILL TO THE KING.

THE GOLDSMITH'S WIFE.

.BY

WILLIAM HARRISON AINSWORTH,

AUTHOR OF "OLD ST. PAUL'S," "WINDSOR CASTLE," "ROOKWOOD," &c., &c.

• WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY F. GILBERT.

LONDON:

JOHN DICKS, OFFICE OF "BOW BELLS," 313, STRAND.

THE GOLDSMITH'S WIFE.

A TALE.

BOOK THE FIRST.

ALBAN SHORE.

HOW JANE MILVERTON, THE MERCER'S DAUGHTER OF CHEAPSIDE, WAS ACCOUNTED THE FAIREST DAMSEL IN LONDON.

WHEN Edward the Fourth was King, there were many fair damsels in the City of London, but none to compare with Jane, only daughter of John Milverton, erstwhile a mercer in Cheapside.

Jane Milverton was in her seventeenth spring when her remarkable beauty first began to attract the attention of the young bachelors of the City; and whenever she walked forth with her mother, she was beset by a host of admirers, who vied with each other in endeavours to win a smile from her.

Their efforts were vain. Brought up by a very careful mother, and being naturally modest and discreet, Jane took little notice of them. However, the report of her beauty spread far and wide, and caused so much talk, that people came from all parts of the City to look at her.

Opinions differed, and faults were found—of course, chiefly by her own sex, who were unwilling to admit that she was as lovely as represented; but none could deny that her figure was exquisite, and that her features had a most charming expression.

To be more precise, we may say that her figure was slight and graceful; her tresses of a pale yellow; her features delicately and beautifully moulded; her complexion excessively fair, and her eyes of the softest blue. We ought to add that there was a singular witchery in the glances of those tender blue eyes, experienced by all who came within their influence; while the pearls disclosed when her coral lips were parted, rendered her smile resistless.

Such was Jane Milverton at seventeen.

As we have just intimated, she had been

most carefully brought up by her widowed mother, who, since her husband's death, had led a very secluded life. Indeed, if the young damsel had been educated in a convent, she could scarcely have known less of the world. Strange as it may seem, it is, nevertheless, true, that, until lately, she had been quite unconscious of her own marvellous beauty.

Jane's attire was simple, but it suited her well. Generally, a coverchief, or hood, completely concealed her profuse yellow tresses, but, at times, a pretty little coil allowed them to escape, and flow down her back. A tight-fitting girdle displayed her slim figure to the greatest advantage, and a girle, with a chain attached to it, rested on her hips. The long-pointed shoes that disguised her tiny feet were almost hidden by a dark blue gown, and their sharp extremities could only just be seen peering forth. Beyond the girdle and magnificent gold chain, she wore no sort of ornament—not even a collar round her swan-like throat.

Among Jane's innumerable admirers was a rich goldsmith, of Bombard Street, named Alban Shore. Deeply smitten by her charms, he resolved to make her his wife. He knew he had many rivals, but as the coy damsel had not shown a preference for any one, he persuaded himself he should succeed. He could give his bride a handsome dowry, and that was a great recommendation. Moreover, he bore a most honourable character, as his father, Gethelmar Shore, had done before him. Many a wealthy citizen would have been glad to give his daughter to Master Shore, the prosperous goldsmith and banker, but Alban had shown no disposition to marry till he beheld the fair Jane Milverton.

Alban was under thirty, but the long gown of dark red cloth, buttoned from neck to waist, which he wore above his quilted tunic, and his close, dark cap, with a narrow edge of velvet, combined with his grave looks and demeanour, made him appear at least ten

years older. The expression of his countenance was agreeable, and indicated great goodness of heart. He was of middle height, well-proportioned, and strongly built; but his person was completely hidden by his ample gown. From his girdle hung a red leather pouch. Sword, dagger, or weapon of any kind, would have been unsuitable to his peaceful vocation.

Alban Shore made no change in his sober attire when he presented himself one day to Dame Milverton, with the design of proposing for the hand of her fair daughter.

The widow was alone at the time—Jane being in an inner room. As she was still good-looking, she thought the visit might be intended for herself.

Requesting him to be seated, she very considerably sought to relieve him from the embarrassment under which she perceived he laboured.

"I know you very well by sight, good Master Shore," she said; "and, indeed, it is strange, seeing we are such near neighbours, that we are not better acquainted. But I trust to see more of you in future. You will always be welcome."

Alban bowed, and the widow went on:—

"My ever-lamented husband, John Milverton, was one of your worthy father's customers. Several ornaments, which I still wear on occasions, were purchased at Gethelmar Shore's shop in Lombard Street. Among other matters, there was this ring. I pray you look at it, good Master Shore;" holding up a very pretty finger, on which the ring was placed. "You will observe that a posy is written outside it,—

"This and the giver,
Are thine for ever."

Touching and tender, is it not? Alack and well-a-day! the giver is gone, and I am left alone! John Milverton has been dead these ten years, Master Shore, and lies in the churchyard of St. Martin's Pomary. I have placed a monument to his memory in the north aisle of the church. Mayhap you have seen it?"

"Often, madam," he replied; "and a very handsome monument it is."

"It cost me three hundred crowns, Master Shore,—every penny. But the money was well bestowed. Do you recollect my husband, worthy sir?"

"Perfectly, madam. John Milverton was one of the most noted mercers in East Cheap. But he must have been considerably older than yourself."

"Thirty years, Master Shore—thirty years. Some foolish folks used to jeer at the disparity of our ages. I always declared it was a match of Our Lady's making, since it turned out so happily."

"So I have always heard, madam. You must have made the worthy mercer an excellent wife."

"I ought not to praise myself," said the widow, rather flustered; "but I think I did. And if I could have been tempted to take a

second husband, I should have been equally anxious to please him. I have had several good offers, Master Shore—very good offers—but I would accept none of them, having a daughter to attend to."

"Very true, madam; and the greatest credit is due to you for the manner in which you have brought up your daughter."

"I am very glad to hear you say so, Master Shore. I think I have done my duty by her. Her poor, dear father would be amazed if he could behold her now. I myself never expected she would grow up so fair a creature."

"Of a truth, she has burst as suddenly into bloom as a flower," observed the goldsmith. "But she always promised to be beautiful. With so fair a mother, how could it be otherwise?"

"You flatter me, sir," simpered the widow. "But it is quite true that at Jane's age I was exactly like what she is now."

"I can well believe it, madam," remarked Shore.

"No doubt she is light-complexioned, and I have always been rather dark," said Dame Milverton; "but the features are similar."

"Precisely similar," observed the goldsmith, with a smile, "except that your nose is inclined to be aquiline, and your daughter's is perfectly straight. And now, madam, I am a man of business, as you are aware, and must come to the point. I dare say you can guess my errand?"

"I have some idea of it, sir," she replied, casting down her eyes.

"I have serious thoughts of taking a wife, madam. Your daughter's charms have produced a great impression upon me."

"My daughter's charms!" exclaimed the widow, looking up. "I thought—"

"I love her devotedly, madam!" pursued the goldsmith; "and if I am fortunate enough to win her, I will do my best to prove how highly I estimate the prize."

"I do not doubt it, sir!" replied the widow, in some confusion. "But you have taken me so much by surprise, that I scarcely know what to say."

"You do not discourage my suit, I trust, madam. Mine are no empty promises. I have always been a man of my word. Jane shall have everything she can desire with me, and I will give her a handsome dowry—ten thousand crowns."

"You speak so fairly and kindly, Master Shore," said the widow, who had now recovered herself, "that you deserve a direct answer. To me your offer is very agreeable. What it may be to my daughter I cannot say, but we will soon ascertain."

"It is everything in my favour that I have your support, madam," said Shore, joyfully.

"Not everything," she replied. "I will do my best to further your suit, but I cannot force Jane's inclinations."

"Heaven forbid you should, madam!" he exclaimed. "Unless she can give me her heart, I will not accept her hand."



THE KING PRESENTS A SOUVENIR TO JANE. (See page 17.)

"Ah! here she comes to answer for herself," cried Dame Milverton, as a light, joyous laugh was heard outside.

Shore's heart sank within him. Another minute would decide his fate.

An inner door opened, and Jane rushed into the room, with a letter in her hand, laughing very heartily.

III.

HOW TWENTY-THREE BACHELORS FELL IN LOVE WITH JANE, AND ENTREATED HER TO MAKE CHOICE OF ONE OF THEM.

How beautiful she looked! her fair cheeks flushed, her blue eyes shining with unaccustomed lustre, and all the pearls in her lovely mouth displayed. What a bright, joyous countenance! Alban felt more at home with her than ever!

Jane's attention being fixed on the letter she had brought to show her mother, she was quite unconscious of the goldsmith's presence.

"Another proposal!" she exclaimed, as soon as she was able to speak; "and from that presumptuous young popinjay, Randal Rubicel, the haberdasher's son, who stopped us yesterday, and would speak with me. He calls me 'his sweetest Jane,' 'the idol of his heart,' 'his life,' 'his joy,' 'his darling,' and twenty other pretty names, and vows he will kill himself unless I accept him. Well, let him! There will be one coxcomb the less in Cheapside—ha! ha!"

And she indulged in another fit of merriment.

"Jane," said her mother, checking her, "are you aware that Master Shore is here?"

"No, indeed," rejoined her daughter, in dismay; "I thought you were alone. I beg Master Shore's pardon for my heedlessness. He must have thought me very stupid."

"On the contrary," remarked the goldsmith, advancing and bowing, while she returned the salutation, "I have been very much amused. 'I suppose you often receive such letters?'"

"Generally two or three a day—sometimes more," she rejoined, laughing. "But I answer none of them. I had one yesterday from young Simon Mittlebury, the grocer's son, of the Poultry, as full of sweets and dainties as his father's shop. I would read it to you if I had not burnt it."

"Did he think you would condescend to become a grocer's wife?" observed Shore.

"I have had my choice," she continued; "of fishmongers, merchant-tailors, grocers, driers, skimmers, ironmongers, vintners, cloth-workers, and mercers. Being a mercer's daughter, I ought to have selected the last—but young Humphrey Buckram did not please me."

"You have not enumerated a goldsmith in your list," observed Shore.

"For a very good reason; no goldsmith has proposed!" she rejoined.

"The reason exists no longer," said Shore.

"I have come here for the express purpose of offering you my hand."

"You are jesting with me, Master Shore!" she remarked.

"Nay, it is true!" said her mother. "The worthy gentleman has just spoken to me on the subject."

"I trust I may have better fortune than those who have written to you, sweet Jane," said Shore, drawing near her. "Will you accept me as a husband?"

"Nay, you must not press me for an answer at once," she rejoined. "I cannot have time for consideration. I am very busy."

"At least you do not despise me?"

"I do not ask you to come again; but I shall always be pleased to see you if you do come."

"Then I will gladly avail myself of the permission."

"Tis more than she has accorded to any one else," remarked Dame Milverton.

"Then I ought to be content," said Shore. "Having received thus much encouragement, I will venture to offer you this earnest."

Opening the little case presented to her, Jane beheld a splendid chain of diamonds.

"O heavens! how exquisite!" she exclaimed. "May I accept this beautiful diamond chain, mother?"

"Assuredly, child," replied Dame Milverton.

"You will never lack jewels if you become Master Shore's bride. Besides, I must tell you," she added, in a half whisper, "he has promised to settle a handsome dowry upon you."

The remark was not without effect upon Jane, and Shore's hopes began to revive. Evidently the diamonds had pleaded strongly in his behalf.

Jane was still fascinated by the brilliant chain, when a serving-man entered, his countenance proclaiming that he was charged with some important message.

"How now, Griffith! what is the matter?" inquired the widow.

"An' please you, mistress," replied the serving-man, with difficulty preserving his gravity, "there are a dozen young bachelors without, who solicit an interview with Mistress Jane."

"A dozen young bachelors!" exclaimed the gay damsel. "Who are they?"

"Suitors, no doubt," observed Shore, laughing.

"Ay, that's it, your worship," said Griffith, who was a privileged person. "Mistress Jane has turned the heads of all the young men in the neighbourhood!"

"Suitors would never come in such numbers!" cried the widow. "Saidst thou not there were a dozen, Griffith?"

"And I will truth say I counted them, mistress," she replied.

"We will soon ascertain their business," said the widow. "Pray them to step in; my daughter will receive them in my presence."

As Griffith went out, Dame Milverton

said to the goldsmith, who was preparing to leave,—

"Pray do not go, good Master Shore. You may be of assistance to us."

Next moment, the door was thrown wide open by Griffith, and admittance given to a large party of young men, arrayed in jerkins and hose of red, blue, brown, and yellow, most of them armed with daggers, and some wearing shoes with long, pointed toes.

As the young bachelors entered, they all doffed their caps, and made a profound salutation to the company, which they repeated after advancing a little further into the room.

Though all were well-favoured, fine-looking young men, their appearance was so grotesque that Jane could scarcely keep her countenance, and Griffith grinned from ear to ear.

The leader of the party, who was no other than Randal Rubicel, the haberdasher's son, described by Jane as a popinjay, then proceeded to explain the object of their visit.

"You are fortunate, madam," he said, addressing the widow, but keeping his eye upon Jane as he spoke, "in possessing a daughter universally allowed to be the fairest damsel in London. You see before you twelve young bachelors, each passionately in love with her, and anxious to obtain her hand. Instead of quarrelling, and settling the difference with the sword, we have agreed to present ourselves in a body to the fair Jane, and entreat her to make choice of one of us for a husband. However great may be the disappointment of those passed over, we have sworn to abide by her decision. The course we have adopted may appear strange, but then it rarely happens that a dozen bachelors fall in love with the same damsel. I need scarcely present my companions to you; since, methinks, you are acquainted with them all."

"Yes; this is Master Simon Muttelbury, the grocer," said the widow; "this is Master Puncloon, the vintner; this, Master Serge, the cloth-worker; this, Master Hide, the skinner; this, Master Buckraff, the mercer. But, indeed, you are all well known to me, and there is not one to whom I could object if my daughter's choice should fall upon him."

Rubicel then advanced towards Jane, and, bowing lowly, said,—

"You have heard what has just passed, fair mistress. Will it please you to cast your eyes towards us, and make a selection?"

"I should feel puzzled," she replied. "You are all so much alike, that, were I to choose, it would be at haphazard. I pray you pass before me singly."

"Willingly!" said Rubicel.

And, returning to his companions, he communicated her wishes to them.

Thereupon all the young bachelors marched slowly past Jane, each gazing anxiously at her as he went by, and two or three slightly lingering in the vain hope of being selected, but she did not stop one of them.

The last to make the essay was Rubicel

himself; but though he paused, and cast a supplicating look at her, he failed, like those who had preceded him.

The march ended, they all drew up in front, and the question was put to Jane whether she had made a choice.

She shook her head.

A general groan then burst from the assemblage.

"Gentlemen," said Shore, "having had your answer, I must pray you to depart peaceably."

"We shall not depart at your bidding, Alban Shore!" rejoined Rubicel, angrily. "You think to carry off the prize because you are richer than any of us; but you are mistaken! Not till you have vanquished us all shall you wed the beautiful Jane Milverton! You have a dozen duels to fight!—a dozen duels! Speak I not for you as well as for myself, comrades?" he added, to the others.

"You express our sentiments exactly, Rubicel," responded Simon Muttelbury. "This intrusive goldsmith shall fight every one of us, ere we will yield Jane Milverton to him!"

"Ay; every one of us!" echoed the rest of the party.

"You give yourselves strange license, young sirs!" cried the widow, sharply. "You talk of my daughter as if you had the right to dispose of her; but I shall give her to whom I please, without consulting you! You were allowed admittance on the understanding that you would conduct yourselves decorously, and it is a most unmannerly proceeding on your part to insult a gentleman whom you find in my house!"

"Heed them not, madam," said Shore. "I laugh at their threats!"

"We feel the reproof, madam," said Rubicel, "and will at once retire; but Master Shore shall hear from us!"

"Whenever you please!" replied the goldsmith, carelessly.

"Adieu, sweet mistress!" cried Rubicel, kissing the tips of his fingers to Jane. "If you marry, you must marry one of us; we will brook no rivals!"

"I would rather enter a convent than marry any of you!" cried Jane, contemptuously.

"You will change your mind ere long, fair mistress!" cried Humphrey Backram. "Recollect there are twelve proper young men from whom you can always choose."

"Show them to the door, Griffith!—show them to the door!" cried Dame Milverton, impatiently. "We have had enough of this fooling!"

The disappointed bachelors then withdrew, but not one of them left the room without kissing his hand to Jane.

As soon as they were gone, Jane gave vent to the laughter she had hitherto repressed.

"I am glad we are fairly rid of those foolish fogies," she cried. "I hope you will not be troubled on my account, Master Shore."

"Give yourself no concern about me, fair

mistress," he rejoined. "If I am happy enough to have obtained your consent to my proposal, I shall not heed their opposition."

"But I have not yet accepted you, Master Shore," she rejoined, with a laugh; "and I must be quite certain that I like you ere I do."

"You will never be serious, Jane," said her mother.

"I hope she will always be gay as now," remarked Shore. "If I had my way, her path should be ever strewn with flowers!"

"Then my life would be a perpetual wedding-day!" cried Jane, still laughing.

"And a very happy life it would be, were such the case!" said her mother.

Just then Griffith re-entered the room, and said to the goldsmith,—

"Your worship must be pleased to tarry here awhile. Those perverse young bachelors are pacing to and fro before the door, evidently awaiting your coming forth."

"Let them cool their heels; 'twill do them good!" cried the widow. "If you have no pressing business to take you hence, good Master Shore, I pray you stay and spend the day with us. We will do our best to entertain you."

The goldsmith accepted the invitation with delight. His rivals had unintentionally done him great service.

III.

FROM WHICH IT APPEARS THAT AN OLD WOMAN
HAD FORETOLD THAT JANE WOULD HAVE A
ROYAL LOVER.

OWING to this fortunate circumstance, the enamoured goldsmith saw more of the fair object of his affections than he had ever done before.

Never was such a gay, light-hearted creature as Jane Milverton! The most trifling matter excited her merriment, and, as her mother had just stated, it seemed quite impossible she could continue serious for more than a minute.

Alban, however, was enchanted, and would not have had her different for the world. Had he not been already captivated, he could not have resisted her fascinations.

At her mother's request, Jane brought her lute, and sang several merry lays and romances—sang them charmingly.

Alban now felt the full force of her soft blue eyes as they were fixed upon him, while her accents vibrated to his heart. In some of the roundels he was able to take part, and acquitted himself so well that he obtained her applause, and that was all he desired.

But the blending of their voices had so enthralled him, that, unable to restrain his feelings, he renewed his suit, and vowing to be here, and here alone, besought her earnestly to plight her troth to him in her mother's presence.

"I will not engage myself to any one at present," she said. "In three months you shall have my answer—not before."

"Three months! Must I wait so long?" cried Alban.

"Indeed you must. I must know you better ere I accept you."

"'Tis a sufficient reason, and I submit."

"That is not the reason," remarked Dame Milverton. "She is waiting for a suitor who will never come. Master Shore shall hear the truth. He will think you very silly, but no matter. You must know, then, worthy sir," she continued, addressing the goldsmith, "that when Jane was almost a child, she had her fortune told by an old woman, who passed for a witch."

"Not a word more, I insist!" interrupted her daughter.

"Nay; I will go on! The old woman declared that the child whose little hand she held in her own was destined to great good fortune, and would have a royal lover."

"A royal lover!" exclaimed Shore. "And do you really believe in the prediction?" he added, to Jane.

"She does!" interposed her mother; "and that is the reason why she declines to accept you."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Jane, blushing.

"I am glad you have no better reason for refusing me than this prophecy," said Alban.

"You laugh at me," rejoined Jane, rather piqued, "but it might come to pass. There is no telling."

"Everything is possible," observed Shore. "Unluckily, the King is married. He must get rid of his Queen before he can wed you. I am afraid you will have to put up with one who, though he cannot boast of royal descent, will love you better any monarch could love you. Indeed, unless he is belied, King Edward is not altogether faithful to the Queen."

"But she is very beautiful, is she not?" inquired Jane.

"Not so beautiful as she was, but still very beautiful," rejoined Alban. "As Elizabeth Woodville, daughter of Jacquette of Luxembourg, Duchess of Bedford, and Sir Richard Woodville, subsequently created Earl Rivers by the King, she was accounted the loveliest damsel in the realm. As you are aware, the Queen was the widow of Sir John Gray, of Groby, when the King secretly married her. Some people say she bewitched him, but the only sorcery she practised proceeded from her personal charms. Her first meeting with her royal husband was singular, and, no doubt, it was contrived. One day the King was hunting in Whittlebury Forest, near Grafton Castle, the residence of the Duchess of Bedford, and while riding along a glade, he saw, standing beneath the wide-spreading branches of an oak, a most lovely woman, holding two children by the hand. Struck by her surpassing beauty, he paused to speak with her. Elizabeth Woodville—for she it was—threw herself at his feet, and pleaded for her children, who had been deprived of their inheritance owing to their father's devotion to the House of Lancaster. She did not

plead in vain. The King at once granted her suit, and so captivated was he by the charms of the lovely widow, that within a month he made her his bride. Their espousals took place secretly at Grafton Castle, in the presence of the Duchess of Bedford, by whom it was thought the affair had been planned. 'Tis seldom a plot succeeds so well, but the Duchess is wondrously clever, and knew that the King could not resist a pair of beautiful eyes!"

"His Majesty is very handsome, is he not?" asked Jane.

"I marvel you have not seen him," replied Shore, evasively. "He is frequently in the City, for it is his business to conciliate the rich burghesses. On more than one occasion he has purchased articles of jewellery from me. Unluckily, he does not always pay for what he buys. However, I must own he is very affable. Some of his attendants—the Lord Howard and Sir John Cheney, for instance, who pay no better than he does—are excessively haughty and supercilious."

"Oh! how I should like to see him!" cried Jane. "I wish you could conceal me in your shop, Master Shore, when he next pays you a visit."

"No, no," said the goldsmith, laughing. "Were you mine—as I trust you will be—I would keep you carefully out of the way of such a daring and unscrupulous libertine as the King."

"But he shouldn't see me," said Jane.

"You might betray yourself unintentionally," rejoined Alban.

"You are quite right, good Master Shore," said the widow. "One cannot be too cautious where a person who puts no bridle on his passions, like the King, is concerned. That is the reason why I will never allow Jane to stand at the window when his Majesty and his courtiers pass along Cheapside."

"If he caught sight of her, he would infallibly be struck by her beauty," said Shore.

"Suppose he did! what then?" cried Jane. "You seem to fancy I have no power of resistance, and should drop into his Majesty's mouth like a ripe plum. You are both very much mistaken. I have a great curiosity to see the King, and am resolved to gratify it. You look very cross," she added, to her mother. "Where is the harm, I should like to know?"

"There is a great deal of harm," rejoined the widow, angrily. "And I will look you up in your chamber, whenever the King rides by, unless you promise to attend to my injunctions."

During the foregoing discussion, Alban maintained a cheerful exterior, but he was not quite so easy as he had been in his mind. A feeling of jealousy, caused by Jane's ardent desire to see the King, had taken possession of him. But he deemed it ridiculous, and endeavoured—though ineffectually—to shake it off.

The rest of the evening passed very pleasantly. The lute was again introduced, and

an occasional song filled up the intervals of conversation.

At length the great bell of Paul's tolled forth the hour of nine, warning the discreet goldsmith that it was time to depart; and though he could scarcely tear himself away, he felt he must needs go.

While he was taking leave, Dame Milverton expressed some anxiety lest he should be troubled by the insolent youths who had threatened him; but he soon quieted her alarm, and volunteered to come next evening.

In parting with Jane, he strove to snatch a kiss, but was unsuccessful.

Griffith, on whom he bestowed a piece of silver, as an earnest of his good will, would fain have attended him with a lantern, but he declined the offer.

IV.

HOW ALBAN SHORE ON THE WAY HOME ENCOUNTERED TWO COURT KNIGHTS, AND HOW JANE WAS SERVED.

THE night proved so dark, that Alban regretted he had not brought Griffith and the lantern with him; for though he had laughed at Dame Milverton's fears, he was not altogether without apprehension of an attack by some of his rivals, who might be lying in ambuscade. Moreover, it also occurred to him that he was without a defensive weapon of any kind.

However, he marched on resolutely, and had preceded about a hundred yards in the direction of Lombard Street, without encountering any one, when he perceived two persons standing at the corner of Wood Street.

Both were muffled up in long mantles, and their appearance being rather suspicious, he would have avoided them, but it was too late, for one of them—a person of much loftier stature than any of the young bachelors—stepped towards him, and in accents that had something of authority in their tone, said—

"Save you, friend! Can't tell us which is Dame Milverton's dwelling?"

Startled by the inquiry, Shore did not immediately answer, and the tall stranger repeated the inquiry, yet more authoritatively.

"What would you with her?" said the goldsmith. "Dame Milverton receives not visitors at this hour."

"Soh! you are acquainted with her," cried the other. "By St. George, that is lucky! You shall show us the house, and introduce us to the widow."

"For whom do you take me, that you venture to make such a proposition?" demanded Shore, controlling his anger.

"I take thee for an honest and estimable burghess," replied the other. "Nay, if I am not wrong—for I cannot distinguish thy features very clearly—thou art Shore, the goldsmith of Lombard Street."

"You have guessed rightly," said Alban; "I am Shore, the goldsmith. Your voice seems familiar to me; but I cannot give you

a name. You belong not to the City—of that I am certain."

"No, by the mass, I belong to the Court! My companion and myself are knights, attendant upon the King. He is Sir William Chamberlain, and I am Sir Edward de Longespée. Now you know who we are, will you conduct us to Dame Milverton's habitation? We have heard much of the extraordinary beauty of her daughter Jane, and desire to behold the fair young damsel."

A jealous pang shot through Shore's breast as he listened to the explanation. He had previously suspected their design; but this plain avowal quite staggered him.

"I will not be accessory to any, such plan, Sir Edward," he replied. "If you desire to behold Dame Milverton's daughter, you must call at a proper hour."

"My belief is, you are in love with her yourself, Master Shore," cried Sir William, advancing, "and are therefore unwilling we should see her."

"Be not alarmed, Shore," said Longespée; "we have no intention of carrying her off. Very likely her charms have been overrated."

"There is not a damsel at Court who is half so beautiful," cried Alban.

"Said I not thou art in love with her?" exclaimed Sir William, laughing. "Thou hast betrayed thyself, Shore."

"We will not be baffled in our quest," said Longespée. "Since this churlish goldsmith refuses to direct us, we will find out the house without him. Good night, Shore! Thou wilt regret thy incivility."

And they moved on.

Greatly disturbed, the goldsmith was considering what he should do, when the door of the "Mitre," a famous tavern close at hand, was suddenly opened, and forth issued the whole of the young bachelors, who had been carousing together. From their unsteady gait, it was evident their potations had been deep.

The light streaming from the entrance of the tavern revealed Shore to them, and setting up a loud shout, they hurried towards him.

"By St. Martin! this is a rare piece of luck!" cried Rubicel. "Who would have thought of finding our goldsmith here? Since Fate has delivered thee into our hands, thou shalt not escape till thou hast sworn to resign all pretensions to the fair Jane."

"Thou hearest, Shore?" cried Simon Muttiebury. "The oath shall be dictated to thee."

"I will take no oath on compulsion," said Alban. "Detain me at your peril!"

"At our peril!" cried Muttiebury, with a scornful laugh, and drawing his sword as he spoke. "That is good! Thou hast best comply without more ado."

"Swear to resign the damsel, and thou art free," said Rubicel.

"Never!" cried Shore. "You seek in vain to intimidate me," he added, as swords were flourishing in his face, "Help! help!"

"Cease this clamour," exclaimed Muttiebury, "or we will silence thee effectually!"

But the goldsmith called out more loudly.

His cries reached the ears of the courtiers, and they hurried back to the spot.

Recognising Shore's voice, and finding him beset by numbers, they whipped out their blades, and ordered his captors to set him free.

Instead of obeying, the valorous young citizens turned upon them; but after a few blows had been exchanged with their powerful adversaries, their swords were knocked from their grasp, and they were compelled to let the captive go.

While the discomfited bachelors picked up their weapons, the goldsmith tendered his best thanks to his deliverers.

"What offence hast thou given these varlets, Master Shore, that they should thus maltreat thee?" demanded Longespée.

"That they themselves can best explain, Sir Edward," replied Alban.

"We bear him no ill will," said Rubicel. "He is our rival for the hand of the fairest damsel in the City. By reason of his wealth, his chance is greater than ours, so we have been trying to persuade him to retire."

"Go to, rascal!" cried Longespée, laughing. "Thy mode of persuasion savours of force. But thou speakest of the fairest damsel in the City. That should be Jane Milverton."

"Your worship hath made a good guess," replied Rubicel. "'Tis she, in sooth."

"Then ye are all her suitors?"

"All!" cried the bachelors, with one voice.

Longespée and his companion laughed heartily.

"We are not Jane's only admirers," said Muttiebury. "For that matter, half the young men in London are in love with her. Doubtless her charms have been heard of at Court, and may even have reached the King's ears."

"Thou art right, good fellow—they have," said Longespée. "I should like to judge of this paragon of perfection. I may not think so highly of her as thou dost. What suits thy taste may not suit mine."

"There cannot be two opinions as to Jane Milverton's beauty," said Rubicel. "She dwells hereabouts. A serenade might bring her to the window, and you could then obtain a glimpse of her. Unluckily, we are not provided with lute or cittern."

"But you have voices worth listening to, I'll be sworn," said Longespée, pleased with the notion.

"Now I bethink me, there is a minstrel in the 'Mitre,'" continued Rubicel. "We might take him with us."

"Excellent!" cried Longespée. "Fithce, fetch him!"

And as Rubicel departed on the errand, he added to the goldsmith, "I shall have my wish, and without trouble."

Shore was too much vexed to make a reply. A couple of silver groats induced the minstrel to accompany the party. The young bachelors led the way to the widow's deni-

cile, which was at no great distance, and the two courtiers followed.

Shore went with them, resolved to see the end of the adventure.

Like all the adjoining habitations, Dame Milverton's house was built of lath and plaster, and had bay windows, and pointed gables of carved oak.

A light was visible in the lower room, but the window-curtains were drawn. Everybody felt certain, however, that those inside the apartment were Jane and her mother.

As soon as the young bachelors had arranged themselves, the minstrel struck up a tender love-song—all the youths joining in chorus at the end of each couplet.

At first, very little notice was taken of the serenaders, but by-and-by there were indications that the song was listened to; and before it concluded, the curtains were drawn back, and Jane and her mother could be seen.

As the damsel held a taper in her hand, her fair features were clearly distinguishable.

Never was a creature more charming seen than was presented to the lookers-on. The two courtiers were enraptured.

"'Tis she!—'tis Jane Milverton herself!" said Rubicel. "What think you of her? Is her beauty over-rated?"

"Not a whit," rejoined Longespée. "By my halidome! she is the loveliest creature I ever beheld. I should never tire of gazing at her."

"You are crazed, like all the rest," said his companion, laughing at his enthusiasm.

"I must not lose this opportunity," said Longespée. "I will speak to her."

"Nay, I beseech you, do not!" cried the other.

Unaccustomed, however, to put any restraint upon himself, and regardless of consequences, the tall Knight derided the counsel, and marching up to the window, tapped against it.

Startled by the noise, Jane looked in the direction whence it proceeded, but could only discern a lofty figure.

Longespée tapped again.

"A word with you, fair damsel, I entreat," he cried.

"Who is it?" asked Jane. "I hold no converse with a stranger."

"Open the window, and you shall learn who I am," said the Knight.

"Whoever you are, I owe you no thanks for bringing these troublesome youths here," she rejoined. "Begone, and take them with you. They have disturbed me sufficiently."

"Deny me not!" implored the Knight. "I have something important to say to you."

"How tiresome he is!" exclaimed Jane. "Well, I must get rid of him."

And she was stepping towards the window, when some one amid the throng collected outside, called out in a loud voice, "Beware!"

In an instant the taper was extinguished, and Jane vanished.

Immediately afterwards, the curtains were

again drawn, and nothing more could be seen of the inmates of the house.

Feeling that his chance was over, the Knight drew back.

"Who called out?" he angrily demanded.

No one could tell him. But he suspected it must have been Share, for the goldsmith could not be discovered.

"Are you now ready to depart?" inquired his companion, approaching him.

Longespée answered in the affirmative.

The other then placed a whistle to his lips, and blew a call.

The young bachelors were filled with wonderment, but their surprise increased when two grooms appeared, each leading a horse.

The Knights instantly mounted, and, bidding "Good night" to the youths, rode off in the direction of Ludgate.

"Those must be great personages," remarked Rubicel to his companion. "Marked you not that their grooms wore the royal livery?"

V.

IN WHAT MANNER JANE'S CONSENT WAS WON BY ALBAN.

NEARLY three months had passed by, and during this period of probation Alban was constant in his attendance upon Jane.

On each evening he came to her mother's house, and was always well received, but he could not flatter himself that he made much progress in the young damsel's affections.

She did not dislike his society, but appeared indifferent to him; and he felt her coldness deeply. Sometimes he fancied she loved another, but he was utterly unable to discover his rival. It could not be one of the twelve young bachelors; for though they still persecuted Jane with their addresses, she would listen to none of them. It could scarcely be Sir Edward de Longespée, for nothing more had been seen of him since the night when he accompanied the serenaders, and tapped against the window.

Alban was perplexed. He mentioned his suspicions to Dame Milverton, but she told him he was mistaken. She was certain he had no secret rival.

Notwithstanding these assurances, he was far from easy, and suffered so much from Jane's coldness, that he resolved to bring the matter to an issue one way or the other.

Generally, Dame Milverton was with them when they met; but on the evening in question she had been induced, by a sign from Alban, to leave them alone together.

No sooner had she quitted the room, than taking Jane's small white hand in his own, he pressed it to his lips. Nor did he part with it as he addressed her.

"I beseech you to abridge the term you have imposed upon me, sweetest Jane," he said. "I and I am not equal to so severe a trial. Besides, why should we wait so long? You know me now as well as you will ever know me, for I have no concealment from you."

How fondly I love you I need not say; but I desire to prove my love by the devotion of a husband. Your mother has given her consent to the marriage—why withhold yours? My house is ready for you; my servants are anxious to call you mistress; all that money can procure shall be yours!”

“I know you can give me wealth, Alban,” she rejoined. “But you cannot give me rank.”

He looked at her for a moment in surprise, and then said in a half-reproachful tone:—

“That silly prophesy still dwells on your mind, I perceive, Jane. I would I were a prince, for your sake!”

“Would you were!” she exclaimed.

Then seeing how much she had pained him, she added, “I am very foolish—very ungrateful. ‘Tis a poor return for your love and kindness to wish you were some one else. Nevertheless, I must own I should like you better if you were a prince.”

“E! these are your real sentiments, Jane,” he remarked coldly, and letting go her hand, “it will be better that all should be at an end between us.”

“Be it so, if you wish it,” she rejoined. “I have spoken frankly. As Alban Shore, the goldsmith, I love you; but I should love you better if you were a noble—still better if you were a prince.”

“If this is jesting, I do not like it,” he said. “Be serious for a moment, if you can. Do you love me well enough to wed me?”

“I can’t tell.”

“But you must decide.”

“Suppose I say ‘No?’”

“In that case, I shall instantly take my departure, and shall not return.”

Uttered in a firm, sad tone, these words produced an impression upon Jane.

Suddenly changing her manner, she replied,

“Then, I must needs say ‘Yes.’”

An instantaneous revulsion took place in Alban’s feelings.

Catching her in his arms, and pressing her rapturously to his breast, he exclaimed,—

“Our marriage shall take place to-morrow.”

“Why so much haste?” she asked.

“Because I have waited too long already—because I am afraid of losing you.”

“How distrustful you are!” she cried.

“Have I not reason for distrust?” he rejoined.

Just then Dame Milverton entered the room, and seeing how matters stood, called out,—

“So all is settled at last, I perceive. I am right glad of it.”

“Yes; Jane has agreed that our marriage shall take place to-morrow,” cried Alban, joyfully.

“To-morrow!” exclaimed the widow. “That is allowing but scant time for preparation.”

“So I think,” observed Jane. “I am in no such hurry. Next week, or next month, will please me just as well.”

“But it won’t please me!” cried her mother. “We will have no postponement. All can be

managed without difficulty,” she added, glancing at Alban.

“Yes, there need be no delay,” he exclaimed. “We will be married at Paul’s. I will go and make all needful arrangements. I leave you to invite the wedding guests, madam,” he said to Dame Milverton.

“Stay,” cried Jane, as he was hurrying off.

“I have something to say to you.”

“I’ll hear it when I come back,” he cried.

“I want to catch Father Bellasius.”

Jane again attempted to remonstrate, but he stopped her mouth with a kiss, and rushed out of the room.

“My consent has been wrested from me,” she cried, as soon as he was gone. “I hope I shall not repent.”

VI.

HOW ALBAN SHORE WAS WEDDED TO THE BEAUTIFUL JANE MILVERTON IN SAINT PAUL’S CATHEDRAL, AND HOW THE KING SALUTED THE BRIDE AT THE PORCH.

SHORTLY before noon, on the day appointed for Alban Shore’s marriage with the beautiful Jane Milverton, it chanced that the King, who had signified his intention of holding a conference with the Lord Mayor and Aldermen, at Guildhall, entered the City on horseback.

Accompanied by his chief favourites, Henry Stafford, Duke of Buckingham, who filled the office of High Constable, and the Lord Hastings, Grand Chamberlain, his Majesty was preceded by a small party of mounted archers, and followed by half-a-dozen henchmen in doublets of blue satin, richly embroidered, murrey-coloured silk hose, and black velvet caps.

Edward the Fourth was then in the very prime of manhood, and justly accounted the handsomest man of his day. His figure was a remarkable combination of strength and elegance—his limbs being very gracefully formed, yet full of vigour. Trained from early youth in all manly exercises, he became so skilful that, as Earl of March, in his nineteenth year, he overthrew every knight he encountered in the tilt-yard.

As the King wore neither beard, nor moustaches, the fine classical outline of his features could be fully distinguished. His complexion was fair, his eyes blue, and his chestnut locks were worn thickly at the back of the head. Yet there was nothing effeminate in his expression; and although good nature seemed stamped upon his handsome lineaments, he had a very courageous and determined look.

Edward’s extreme affability and easy manner rendered him popular with all classes; while his gallantry and good looks gained him the goodwill of the fairer portion of his subjects.

Brave, courteous, handsome, chivalrous, accomplished, he seemed the very model of a king; but we are bound to say that he had many faults. Though good-natured, he was quick to take offence, unforgiving when



THE KING ESCORTS JANE TO THE BALL (See page 28.)

offended, sanguinary in the field, and a confirmed voluptuary.

Elegant in his tastes, the handsome monarch was exceedingly fond of rich attire. Cloth of silver and gold, and velvet lined with the most precious furs, were his constant wear.

On the present occasion an embroidered doublet, of murrey-coloured velvet, fitting tightly to the shape, and having pinked sleeves, so as to show the fine linen beneath it, displayed his figure to the greatest advantage, while blue silk hose set off his shapely limbs. The points of his yellow morocco boots, then called poulaines, and more than an ell in length, were fastened to the knee by chains of gold. His mantle was of purple velvet, lined with the most precious fur. Round his neck was a collar of sun and roses, with the white lion of the House of March appended. A magnificent girdle, studded with gems, and placed above the hips, sustained his sword and dagger, both of which had splendid hilts. His purple velvet cap was without a plume, and ornamented with pearls.

A consummate horseman, Edward was never seen to greater advantage than in the saddle, and the noble steed he now bestrode seemed proud of his princely rider. The charger was caparisoned in blue cloth of gold, embroidered with the royal badge, a flaming sun.

The two nobles by whom the king was attended were fine-looking men, but could not for a moment be compared with their royal master.

Buckingham had a doublet of tawny satin, with a surcoat of violet, ingrained; and Hastings wore a green satin pourpoint, embroidered with gold, and a velvet surcoat of the same colour. Each was decked with a magnificent chain and girdle, and had a collar of suns and roses like the king.

Though Edward's visits to the City were of frequent occurrence, crowds always collected to gaze at him, and welcome him with shouts, while fair, smiling faces could be seen at all the open windows. On the owners of these fair faces the debonair monarch failed not to bestow an admiring glance as he rode along.

On the morning in question, he had a good many buxom dames and comely damsels to greet; and as he was careful not to neglect any of them, his progress from Ludgate to Saint Paul's was necessarily rather slow.

But he appeared in high good humour, and not unfrequently joked with Buckingham and Hastings, who laughed heartily, as becomed them, at the king's pleasantries.

Occasionally, also, he would call their attention to some fair maiden, speaking of her in terms of praise, so loudly uttered as to summon a blush to her cheeks.

Just as the royal cavalcade arrived at Saint Paul's, a great number of persons issued from the cathedral, and ranged themselves on either side of the steps, evidently expecting that

some one they were anxious to behold would speedily come forth.

So engrossed were they by this object that they scarcely noticed the king, who, not wishing to interfere with them, reined in his charger, and signed to the attendant guard to halt.

Instantly the command obeyed, when the great portal was thrown open, and forth came a bridal party.

The marriage between Alban Shore and the lovely Jane Milverton had just been solemnised in St. Etheldreda's chapel, in the presence of an immense number of spectators, amongst whom were the twelve disappointed bachelors.

Jane looked exquisitely beautiful in her bridal costume. A wreath encircled her fair brow, and her sunny locks, being entirely unbound, flowed down her back. The long white veil, that covered her almost from head to foot, was removed by the bridesmaids as she knelt at the altar.

The ceremony was performed by Father Bellasius, a canon of the Cathedral. It was remarked by the bridesmaids that Jane's accents were scarcely audible; and when the nuptial rites had been performed, and Dame Milverton embraced her daughter, she perceived that Jane trembled.

Alban, however, was now the happiest of men; and when his discomfited rivals, who had gathered round him, strove to provoke him by their looks, he regarded them with supreme disdain.

The scene within the cathedral as the bridal party moved along the aisle was extraordinary. Hundreds of spectators, eager to obtain a glimpse of the beautiful bride, pressed upon the newly-wedded pair: and as Jane had not resumed her veil, the curiosity of these persons was gratified.

All who beheld her declared she looked charming, and it was universally thought that she was the loveliest bride that had ever been seen in the ancient cathedral.

At length, after several interruptions, the little procession reached the portal; and as the newly-married pair came forth, Jane's gaze passed rapidly over the vast throng collected outside, and alighted upon a splendid-looking personage on horseback, who, with the two nobles in attendance upon him, was stationed at a little distance from the portal.

"'Tis the King!" observed Alban.

The information was unneeded. The sumptuous apparel and majestic demeanour of the horseman, combined with the deference paid him by his attendants, proclaimed his exalted rank.

Nor could she, for a moment, doubt to whom that stately figure and noble countenance belonged. It was he whom she had so ardently desired to behold.

But her surprise increased when he spoke, and she recognised the voice of the presumptuous stranger who had addressed her at the window of her mother's dwelling.

What strange emotions were excited in her breast by the discovery!

After gazing at her for a moment with looks of undisguised admiration, Edward pressed forward his charger, while the archers kept back the crowd.

"By my troth, Master Shore," he cried, in a good-humoured voice, "you are a right clever fellow, and as lucky as clever! I know not by what arts you have beaten a whole host of rivals, and contrived to win for yourself the fairest damsel that our good City of London can boast; but, however you have gained her, you deserve our hearty congratulations on your success, and you have them!"

"I humbly thank your Majesty," replied Alban, bowing profoundly, while Jane made a deep reverence, "in my own name, and in that of my bride. I can assure your Majesty that I esteem myself singularly fortunate in having obtained such a prize!"

"No wonder!" cried Edward. "But hark ye, Shore! you must not exclude your beautiful wife from public view. If so, all the young bachelors in the City will regret that she has bestowed her hand upon you. Let her be seen; let her appear at all shows and entertainments; let no restraint be put upon her. She must do as she pleases, go where she pleases, and be indulged in all her whims and fancies. This ought now to be agreed upon."

"It is agreed upon, my gracious liege," replied Shore. "My wife shall do exactly as she pleases."

"'Tis well!" cried Edward. "We are now satisfied you will make an indulgent and easy-going husband, and the fair Jane will be the most enviable wife in the City, as she is undoubtedly the prettiest."

Great merriment followed the King's speech.

"I know not how to thank your Majesty for the interest you are pleased to take in me," said Jane, whose cheeks were suffused with blushes. "But indeed I am very grateful."

"Bring thy wife nearer to me, Shore," said the King. "I have a trifling gift to bestow upon her."

And as the injunction was obeyed, and the blushing bride, who really looked lovelier than ever, stood beside him, Edward detached a small diamond clasp from his attire, and presented it to her.

Then, bending down, he passed his arm round her waist, and slightly raising her, imprinted a kiss on her rosy lips.

That Shore approved of this proceeding on the part of the gallant monarch, we cannot avouch; but he forced a smile; and it is quite certain that Jane was not offended.

The lookers on were highly diverted.

In the midst of the general merriment, the King bade adieu to Jane, and, attended by his suite, rode on to Guildhall.

VII.

HOW JANE FOUND A DANGEROUS CONSPIRACY IN ALICIA FORDHAM.

SOME three years had flown since Jane became the wife of Alban Shore; and if she was not perfectly happy, it was her own fault; for she had a most devoted husband, who strove to gratify her every wish.

As she had heretofore been styled the loveliest damsel in the City, she was now known as the fairest wife. None so beautiful as Mistress Shore.

The goldsmith was envied for his good fortune by a great number of City gallants, among whom were the young bachelors previously mentioned, all of whom were still bachelors. But though many of these impertinent coxcombs would fain have intruded upon her notice, Jane gave none of them the slightest encouragement.

During the long interval we have chosen to pass over, Jane had sustained a very great and indeed irreparable loss in the death of her mother. This sad event occurred quite unexpectedly about a year after she had quitted the maternal roof, and was a source of great grief to her. Alban himself sincerely lamented his mother-in-law, and he had more reason for regret than he was aware of at the time. As long as Dame Milverton lived, she watched most carefully over her daughter, who was always governed by her counsels.

Deprived of her mother's judicious advice, Jane chose a friend nearly of her own age, who flattered her in order to obtain an influence over her, and made it her business never to say anything disagreeable. Alicia Fordham, the friend in question, had been one of Jane's bridesmaids, and had since become the wife of a mercer, dwelling in the Poultry.

A lively brunette, with fine dark eyes and dark tresses, and a pretty figure, which she set off to the best advantage by dress,—Mistress Fordham had a very agreeable, insinuating manner. She laid herself out to please Jane, and succeeded so well that she soon became her bosom friend and confidante. Mistress Shore could not exist without her.

This intimacy had a mischievous effect upon the goldsmith's young wife, and would never have been permitted had her mother been alive.

Shore did not altogether approve of it, though he had no idea of the danger; but seeing how fond Jane was of her friend, he did not like to interfere. Moreover, Mistress Fordham was careful to do nothing to forfeit his good opinion.

Never since her wedding-day had Jane set eyes upon the King. Almost immediately after their meeting at the portal of the cathedral, a conspiracy broke out in the North, that led to a renewal of the civil wars that had previously desolated the kingdom, and the best blood in the country again flowed in

torrents on the field of battle and on the scaffold.

Defeated by Warwick, Edward was compelled to fly the kingdom, and take refuge in Holland. But he returned, and soon raising another army, marched upon London, where the citizens opened the gates to him.

Then followed the sanguinary Battle of Barnet, at which Warwick was slain; and three weeks afterwards, the fate of the Lancastrians was decided at Tewksbury, when Queen Margaret of Anjou, and her son, were taken prisoners. The young Prince was massacred by Clarence and Gloucester, in the presence of the victorious Edward, and the Queen was sent a prisoner to the Tower.

The unfortunate Henry VI having been secretly put to death in the Tower, and all the chief partisans of the Red Rose removed, Edward became a tranquil possessor of the throne, and gave himself up for a time to ease and enjoyment.

But, growing tired of this indolence, he roused himself, and entered into a league with his brother-in-law, the Duke of Burgundy, for the invasion of France. With this design he collected a large army, and made other warlike preparations, and he was endeavouring to obtain the necessary supplies for the expedition at the time when our story is resumed.

Firmly attached to the House of York, Shore had watched the long struggle in which Edward had been engaged with the keenest interest. His chief desire, however, was that these internal dissensions should be settled, and the kingdom restored to tranquillity. A civil war was not favourable to his business, either as a banker or a goldsmith, and while it lasted, more jewels and plate were sold than bought. It is true that he could have lent money to half-ruined nobles and knights at any rate of interest he chose to demand; but, as we have said, he was not a usurer. Thus, though he regretted the fate of the unfortunate Henry VI, he was rejoiced when Edward was firmly settled on the throne. The projected invasion of France was popular with the citizens, and Shore shared the general enthusiasm.

One day, when Jane was alone in an upper room, looking into Lombard Street, Mistress Fordham presented herself in a state of great excitement, and exclaimed,—

"What do you think, Jane? The King is coming here this morning. You have often said you wished to see his Majesty again. Now you will have an opportunity. He has business to transact with Shore, and will be here at noon."

"How know you this, Alice?" inquired Jane.

"A royal messenger is below," replied Mistress Fordham. "I saw him as I came in, and learnt his errand. No doubt the King wants to borrow money for the French invasion. But he is sure to ask for you."

"That is very unlikely," replied Jane,

blushing. "I make no doubt he has quite forgotten me. He only saw me on one occasion—nearly three years ago."

"But recollect what occurred then," said Alice. "'Tis impossible he can have forgotten you."

"I hope he has," said Jane.

"I am quite sure he has not," rejoined Alice. "I myself witnessed the scene at the porch of the cathedral, and the King's looks showed plainly enough how much he was in love with you. No! no! be sure he has not forgotten you."

"But I have never heard from him since—never received the slightest message," cried Jane.

"That is easily accounted for," rejoined Mistress Fordham. "The rising in Yorkshire took place at the time, and his Majesty was obliged to march off at once to put down the insurgents. Since then, as you know, he has been constantly engaged in warfare, and has had no time, until lately, to think of lighter matters. As to his having forgotten you, that is quite out of the question."

"You alarm me, Alice. If I thought it likely the King had any design—such as you suggest—in coming here, I would avoid him; for, though I would never listen to his addresses, I should not like to trust myself with him—for it may be very difficult to say 'No' to a King, and my duty to my husband will not allow me to say 'Yes.' Do you really believe he troubles his head about me?"

"I scarcely know how to reply, since you put the question to me in that way," said Mistress Fordham. "I am quite certain the King was in love with you—greatly in love—three years ago. Possibly circumstances may have obliterated your image from his memory, but as you are now lovelier than ever, I am quite certain when he beholds you again that his passion will be revived."

"What would you advise me to do?" cried Jane. "I ought not to see him again."

"Why not?" cried Mistress Fordham. "Surely you have sufficient reliance on yourself! But it will be time enough to consider what you ought to do when you see him."

"No; it will then be too late," said Jane. "To enable you to judge for me, I will confess that for some time after the interview with the King, to which you have just alluded, I did indulge a feeling for him that savoured of love; but I conquered it at last, and now he is nothing to me. Were I to see him again, the feeling might return. You know I have the best and kindest of husbands, and I would not wrong him for the world."

"Shore is an excellent man," said Alice, "But if he were ten times better than he is, I should not think him comparable to the King."

"Alice, I will not allow you to disparage my husband."

"Nay, I deny him none of his merits. I only wish he was as handsome as the King."

"He is quite handsome enough for me," replied Jane. "I am sure he has always been faithful to me, and that is more than the Queen can say of her royal consort."

"Poh! she does not trouble herself about his Majesty's infidelities," said Mistress Fordham. "Fortunately for herself, she is not of a jealous disposition."

Just then a great noise was heard in the street, and, guessing the cause of the disturbance, they flew to the window, and beheld the King.

With him were the Lord Hastings and the Lord Howard, and he was attended by a small body-guard of mounted archers, and a couple of grooms, one of whom held the bridle of his charger as he dismounted. A small body-guard of archers kept back the crowd.

Edward paused for a moment to say a word to Lord Hastings, and during this interval Shore came forth bare-headed, and after making a profound obeisance, ushered the King ceremoniously into his house.

The two nobles did not alight, and the crowd collected in the street was kept back by the archers.

VIII.

SHOWING ON WHAT ERRAND THE KING CAME TO LOMBARD STREET.

HAD Jane acted up to the prudent resolution she had formed, she would have instantly retired from the window when she found it was the King; but she appeared quite fascinated, and continued gazing at him as long as he remained in sight.

How majestic was his mien! Sumptuous attire set off his noble person to the greatest advantage, and so lofty was his stature that he quite dwarfed those who stood near him.

That the King noticed her, Jane could not doubt. Just as he was about to enter the house, he cast his eyes upwards, and gave her a glance of recognition.

Momentary as was the look, it caused the most violent perturbation in her breast, and she shrank from the searching scrutiny of Alice, who was closely watching her.

"Well! was I not right?" cried the latter. "I said you would soon see the King, and lo! here he is. But you look quite overcome. You had better sit down."

"Yes. I do feel rather faint," replied Jane, sinking into a chair. "But I shall recover in a moment. I did not think I should have been so foolish. The King's sudden appearance has thrown me into this state."

"Prepare yourself for an interview," remarked Mistress Fordham. "Depend upon it you will be sent for."

"Nay, then, I must indeed prepare," cried Jane, starting up. "I must make some slight change in my attire. Call Drusilla for me, I beg you, Alice."

"No change is necessary," replied Mistress Fordham. "You cannot look better. Your dress suits you to admiration, and I am sure

his Majesty will be of my opinion. There is not a lady at Court who looks half so well in her velvet and jewels."

"Ah! Alice, you are a dreadful flatterer. But I am running headlong into the danger I ought to avoid. I must stop while there is yet time. Help me, Alice, help me, or I am lost!"

"Why, what a silly, timorous creature you are! There is nothing to cause this uneasiness. His Majesty will pay you a few compliments, and then the interview will be over."

"But it may lead to another interview; there is the danger, Alice."

Whatever reply Mistress Fordham intended was cut short by the sudden entrance of a very pretty handmaiden, whose looks betokened great excitement.

"The King is coming up-stairs, madam," exclaimed Drusilla.

"Oh, dear! what shall I do?" cried Jane. "Receive him, of course," rejoined the other. "What else can you do?"

"Nay, madam, there's nothing to be afraid of," observed Drusilla, in an encouraging tone. "His Majesty looks very gracious. He even smiled at me when I was sent up to you by master. But here he is."

"Saints protect me!" mentally ejaculated Jane.

But, before describing the meeting between Edward and the goldsmith's wife, we must see what took place in Shore's back parlour, whither the King had been conducted when he entered the goldsmith's shop.

No sooner were they alone together in this room than Edward, who wanted to borrow money from the rich goldsmith, thus opened his business:—

"I have come to you for assistance, good Master Shore," he said. "You know that I am about to invade France, with the design of gaining the crown of that country; or, at least, Normandy and Guienne. I have been very liberally dealt with by some of your fellow citizens; but, though I have obtained large sums from them, I have not yet got enough. You must find me ten thousand crowns. I will repay you if I am victorious, as I shall be, for I have the aid of the Dukes of Burgundy and Bretagne."

"Ten thousand crowns! 'Tis a large sum," observed Shore.

"Nay, if you require it, I will give you ample security—jewels of fully thrice the value."

"The deposit is unnecessary," said Shore. "Your Majesty shall have the sum you require. I will take your royal word for the repayment of the money."

"By St. George! you are a noble fellow, Shore!" cried Edward. "Not without reason have you been praised for liberality. You shall not find me ungrateful. Ask any favour in return; 'tis granted ere asked. I swear it by my father's head!"

"I have no boon to ask now, my gracious

liege," rejoined Shore. "Hereafter I may venture to remind your Majesty of your promise."

"When you please," cried the King. "Be sure I shall not forget it. And now, since we have settled this grave affair so satisfactorily, let us turn to a pleasanter matter. It was my good fortune to behold your lovely wife on your wedding day at St. Paul's, and unless my eyes deceived me, I caught sight of her just now at the window above your shop. I would fain have a word with her."

"I will send for her at once," rejoined the goldsmith.

And, opening a side door, he called for Drusilla.

"Nay, by my faith," cried the King, "Mistress Shore shall not come to me; I will go to her. Lead the way, I pray you; lead the way."

Though somewhat discomposed by the order, Shore could not refuse compliance, but, with the best grace he could, conducted the King to the upper room.

IX.

HOW JANE AND HER HUSBAND WERE BIDDEN TO THE FESTIVITIES AT WINDSOR CASTLE.

JANE felt as if she should sink to the ground, when the door was thrown open by her husband, and the King entered the room; but his Majesty's easy and affable manner quickly reassured her.

Raising her graciously as she bent to him, Edward pressed her hand to his lips, and he paid a like gallant attention to Mistress Fordham.

After reminding Jane of his former meeting with her, he said, playfully, "I hope your husband has followed the advice I gave him on that occasion? I suppose he allows you your own way in everything? You do not look as if your inclinations were thwarted."

"Indeed, my liege, I have no complaint to make," replied Jane. "My husband is most indulgent to me. Mistress Fordham will tell your Majesty that there is not a citizen's wife in London who has more liberty and indulgence than myself. Alban has never yet refused a request I have made to him."

"That is much to say, in good sooth," observed the King, "and speaks well both for you and him. We will now put his good nature to the test. Some festivities will be shortly held at Windsor Castle. The Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress, with the aldermen and their wives, will be our guests. You must come with them. Amongst other shows, there will be a tournament."

"Oh, how delightful!" exclaimed Jane. "I have longed so much to see a tournament."

"Then your desire shall now be gratified," said Edward. "You hear, Shore. You must bring your fair wife to our castle of Windsor next week, where both she and you shall be well cared for, and see all that is to be seen."

"I thank your Majesty," replied Shore,

bowing profoundly. "Both my wife and myself are highly honoured by the invitation. 'Tis more than we could expect to be included among your Majesty's guests."

"None will be more welcome," said Edward. "And I am sure no lovelier dame will grace the gallery of the tilt-yard. I shall not be sorry that the haughty Court dames should find themselves outshone by a citizen's wife. I have always maintained that the fairest women are to be found here in London."

"The citizens' wives are greatly beholden to your Majesty," observed Mistress Fordham.

"Nay, I assert the simple truth," said the King. "But you must come with Mistress Shore to the tourney, and witness her triumph."

Alice bent low as she signified her delighted assent.

"Will it please your Majesty to take the money with you?" inquired Shore. "If so, I will give orders respecting it."

"Prithee, do so," rejoined the King, evidently well pleased by the suggestion.

Thereupon the goldsmith made an obeisance, and quitted the room.

No sooner was he gone than Mistress Fordham retired towards the window, so that the King and Jane were left alone together.

"The moment I have so eagerly longed for has arrived," said Edward, taking the hand of the goldsmith's fair wife, and gazing tenderly into her face. "I can now have a word with you. During the long interval that has elapsed, I have never ceased to think of you. In the tent, or on the field, your image has been constantly before me. I have looked upon you as my guardian angel."

"I did not suppose your Majesty ever thought of me," said Jane. "You, who have seen so many beauties—"

"But none of them ever produced the same effect upon me as you. Tell me, sweet Jane," he said, in the soft tones that had generally proved resistless, "have you ever thought of me?"

"Too often for my peace of mind, my liege," she replied. "I have sometimes wished I had never beheld you."

"Oh, say not so!" he cried. "You will have no cause to regret meeting me, for henceforward I will devote myself to you. Fate has separated us for a while, but we are now restored to each other, and we will part no more."

"I must not listen to such language, even from your Majesty," said Jane, trembling.

"You forget that I have a husband, whom I ought to love above all other men, and whose happiness depends upon me."

"Your husband will surrender you to me," said the King. "Nay, he must—if I so will it."

"Your Majesty may take me from him by force—but he will never yield me up. Of that I am certain," replied Jane.

"But you will come to me if your own

free will—will you, not, sweetheart? From love, or pity, you must needs be mine—I cannot live without you.”

“Press me not for an answer, my liege! I dare not give it,” murmured Jane.

“Confess you love me, and I shall be satisfied!” cried Edward.

“Hist! hist!” exclaimed Alice. “There are footsteps on the stairs.”

Next moment, Shore entered the room; and if he had looked towards his wife, he must inevitably have noticed her confusion.

His attention, however, was directed to the King, who had drawn back when the warning was given by Mistress Fordham.

“All is prepared, my liege,” he said. “The bags of money will be delivered to your grooms.”

“I thank you heartily, good Master Shore,” replied Edward. “I repeat you have conferred a great boon upon me. Adieu, fair mistress!” he added, turning to Jane. “We shall soon see you again at Windsor Castle.”

“Why do you not answer?” cried Shore. “Yes, my gracious liege. I will not fail to bring her and Mistress Fordham.”

With a look at Jane, who only just dared to raise her eyes, and who almost shrank from his gaze, the King quitted the room, ceremoniously attended by Shore.

Shortly afterwards, shouts in the street proclaimed that he was mounting his charger, and Alice, who had rushed to the window, called out,—

“Come hither quickly, Jane. His Majesty is looking for you.”

But Jane did not stir.

A trampling was then heard, announcing the departure of the royal cavalcade. But Jane still continued motionless.

Presently Alice left the window, and Jane said to her,—

“Is he gone?”

“Yes,” replied the other. “Why did you not gladden him with a parting smile? He looked back as long as he was in sight.”

“I have done wrong in listening to him, Alice,” said Jane, gravely. “I must not see him again—I will not go to Windsor.”

“Not go to Windsor!—not attend the tournament! What excuse will you make to your husband?”

“I will tell him the truth.”

“Very proper, no doubt—but extremely foolish,” cried Alice, half contemptuously. “You will only make Shore uncomfortable. If you are wise, you will hold your tongue.”

“Perhaps that may be the best course,” observed Jane. “At all events, I won’t go to Windsor.”

“We shall see,” muttered Alice.

Determined to use all her influence to frustrate Jane’s good intentions, Mistress Fordham thought it best not to say anything at the moment, feeling convinced that another and more favourable opportunity for discussing the matter would speedily arise.

She therefore took leave of her friend, pro-

posing to come next day, when she hoped to find that Jane had changed her mind.

“I don’t think I shall,” replied the goldsmith’s wife.

“Don’t decide till to-morrow,” said Alice; “and, meanwhile, say nothing to Alban.”

Rather reluctantly Jane assented to the suggestion, and Alice took her departure.

X.

HOW JANE DETERMINED NOT TO GO TO WINDSOR, AND BY WHOM HER PRUDENT RESOLVE WAS OVERTHROWN.

ALBAN could not help remarking that his wife seemed thoughtful during the remainder of the day, and he was the more surprised by her pensive looks, as he expected she would have been overjoyed by the royal invitation to the tournament.

However, he did not question her on the subject, but on the following day, finding she still looked more serious than was her wont, he said, “Why so melancholy, dearest Jane? Has aught occurred to trouble you? Confide your grief to me.”

“Nay, I have no grief,” said Jane, trying to force a smile.

“Something is certainly upon your mind,” observed Alban. “Does aught connected with the King’s visit disturb you? It may be that you have some dread of appearing among the Court dames, and fancy they may look down upon you. Dismiss any such notion. A goldsmith’s wife may not take rank, but she cannot be slighted; and depend upon it no disrespect will be shown you. If I thought so, you should not go.”

“Oh, no; you are mistaken!” she cried: “I have no fear of being treated with disrespect. But I think it will be best not to go to Windsor. Do not ask my reasons, for I cannot very well explain them. It will be a great disappointment to me not to see the tournament; but I am sure I should experience some annoyance that would do away with all my pleasure.”

“Make yourself quite easy, sweetheart. The King will take care you experience no annoyance.”

“That may be; but you know how censorious people are, and were his Majesty to pay me any attentions, improper constructions would infallibly be put upon them.”

“But if I am satisfied, you need not mind what other people say,” remarked Alban. “I have too much faith in you to be jealous, even of the King.”

“You are too good,” cried Jane, almost overcome. “I do not deserve your confidence.”

“What terrible matter have you kept back from me?” said Alban, smiling good-humouredly, and taking her hand. “Tell me, sweetheart—tell me.”

“Since you will have me speak,” rejoined Jane, summoning up her courage for the dreaded disclosure, “the King professes to be in love with me.”

The announcement did not produce the effect she anticipated. Shore's equanimity was not in the slightest degree disturbed. On the contrary, he smiled, and said, "That is only what I expected. His Majesty professes to be in love with every pretty woman he meets. Many of them are foolish enough to believe him; but I am sure that is not the case with you."

Jane made no answer, and her husband went on.

"You must not for a moment treat the matter seriously. Your safety is in indifference, real or assumed."

"But what am I to do if the King should continue to persecute me with his addresses?"

"Act as I advise, and he will soon desist," replied Shore.

Just then Mistress Fordham made her appearance.

She saw at a glance how matters stood, and though she blamed Jane's imprudence, she was glad to find that Alban seemed so unconcerned.

"Jane has just let me into a secret," he said; "but I daresay it is no secret to you. She tells me the King is in love with her. Knowing his character, I should be surprised if he were not. His passion gives me no sort of uneasiness, because I feel sure it will never be reciprocated. Jane's affection for me could no more be shaken than could mine for her."

"I admire your calmness, sir," rejoined Mistress Fordham. "You view the matter most sensibly. I have always said you are the best of husbands, and you now prove the truth of my assertion. You are quite right in the good opinion you entertain of your wife. Rest assured she will never deceive you."

"I am certain of it," replied Shore. "I should be sorry she stayed away from any mistaken apprehension of the King's designs, which, if contemplated, can easily be baffled." "I will do whatever you desire," said Jane.

"Spoken like a dutiful wife," he cried. "Since the matter is settled, I will now tell you that I have just seen the Lord Mayor. Hearing we are invited to the royal festivities, he offers to take us in his barge to Windsor."

"Oh! that will be delightful!" exclaimed Jane.

"Then you will not blame me for accepting he offer?" remarked Shore.

"Blame you? Oh, no! I should have been grieved if you had declined it. Nothing could please me better than such a trip. But Alice must go with us."

"That is arranged. There will be a large party on board the barge, consisting of the aldermen and their wives, and some other important citizens. I think you will find it amusing."

"I am sure I shall," cried Jane, who was now radiant with delight. "His Majesty seems very desirous to please the citizens."

"He wishes to show his gratitude for the

substantial aid they have given him towards the projected invasion of France," replied Shore. "But I must now leave you, sweetheart. I have some matters of business to attend to."

Well pleased at having brought back the smiles to his wife's fair cheek, he then quitted the room.

"Was there ever such an obliging husband!" exclaimed Alice.

"Never, I am certain," replied Jane. "I should be culpable, indeed, were I to betray his trust in me!"

XI.

OF THE GOODLY COMPANY ASSEMBLED IN THE LORD MAYOR'S BARGE.

VERY lovely was the morn on which Jane and her husband, with Mistress Fordham, stepped on board the Lord Mayor's barge.

At the prow of the burnished vessel floated a large silken banner, emblazoned with the City arms. The oarsmen were clad in rich liveries; several pages were in attendance; and trumpeters in embroidered tunics and velvet caps, made the towers on the bridge ring with the bruit of their silver clarions.

Already the principal part of the company was assembled, and the grand saloon of the barge, hung with silken curtains, and provided with velvet-cushioned seats, presented a splendid sight, being filled with the wives of the sheriffs and aldermen, and some other City dames, all of whom wore rich attire and costly ornaments; collars of gold round the neck, and girdles set with precious stones.

Tall steeple caps, with large butterfly wings attached to them, predominated among the fair assemblage; but a few crescent head-dresses could be seen.

At the upper end of the saloon, and conspicuous by the suppleness of her person, as well as by the splendour of her apparel and ornaments, sat the Lady Mayoress.

A prodigiously fine woman. No wonder her full-blown charms had attracted the King's admiration. Her dress consisted of a crimson velvet gown, richly embroidered, and a large turban-shaped head-dress, adorned with pearls.

The other ladies were, likewise, splendidly dressed, and several of them possessed considerable personal attractions; but there was not one who did not flatter herself that she had been the special object of the gallant King's regards. To gain the goodwill of the citizens, Edward made love to their wives, and, judging by the result, the plan succeeded.

The Lord Mayor was arrayed in crimson velvet, and had a furled velvet cap on his head, and a gold baldric round his neck. The sheriffs and aldermen wore scarlet gowns, with purple hoods, and the splendour of their habiliments added to the brilliant appearance of the assemblage. Moreover, as we have intimated, there were several wealthy



LORD WENLCK WELCOMES THE KING TO FRANCE. (See page 84.)

citizens among the company, and they were all richly attired.

Jane drew all eyes upon herself as she entered, and was conducted to the upper end of the saloon by the Lord Mayor. She was very charmingly dressed in a gown of blue velvet, trimmed with fur; and in lieu of a scepter cup, she wore a roll of white silk, through the centre of which her fair tresses were allowed to pass, and flow down her back. A murmur of admiration arose as she passed on; for there was a witchery about her that was quite irresistible, and the ladies were forced to admit the supremacy of her beauty.

She was very graciously received by the Lady Mayoress, who assigned her a place near her own seat. This attention was the more marked, as the stately dame's manner towards Mistress Fordham was exceedingly stiff and distant.

A few more arrivals took place, and then the whole party being assembled, the gorgeous vessel commenced the ascent of the river, amid the clangour of trumpets, and the shouts of the throng congregated on the wharf.

At first, the progress of the barge was slow—intentionally so, perhaps—and it was a very pretty sight to watch it as it moved on, accompanied by a crowd of smaller barques, nearly all of which were occupied by persons in holiday apparel.

It being understood by the occupants of the barques that the fair Mistress Shore was on board the barge, great curiosity was manifested to obtain a glimpse of her. But this was not so easily accomplished, since Jane was hidden by those around her; and it was not till she was subsequently brought on deck by the Lord Mayor, that she was recognised, and welcomed by a loud shout.

As the day was remarkably fine, a delightful excursion could be calculated upon; and having this pleasant prospect before them, the company were all in high spirits, and nothing was heard in the saloon, or on deck, but lively sallies and laughter.

A water-party, at the time of which we treat, must have been remarkably agreeable; the river being then perfectly clear, and its banks free from all unsightly structures. Indeed, from London Bridge to the old Palace of Westminster, built by Edward the Confessor, and greatly enlarged by the then reigning monarch, a constant succession of picturesque buildings delighted the eye.

Higher up, charming prospects opened on the view; quaint habitations, constituting a small village, and each village boasting a church; ancient mansions, half hidden by trees; gardens with terraces; and, amidst the lawns, sloping down to the water's edge; gray convents, and other monastic-looking houses; parks with long, sweeping glades, amidst which herds of deer could be deeried; such were the principal features of the scenery, through which ran the bright, pellucid river.

Jane was enchanted. Often had she made a little voyage on the Thames, but never under

circumstances more agreeable—never on a finer day.

Moreover, the greatest court was paid her—the Lord Mayor and all the principal personages, vying with each other in attention.

Having traversed the silver current for several miles, the barge had now brought its company to a most lovely region, that still retained the primitive beauty, though lacking, of course, the quiet and secluded character which the surrounding country had.

The river was now flowing past a lovely hill, partially clothed with wood. From the summit of the eminence an unequalled prospect could be obtained: over a vast plain, then so thickly covered with timber that it resembled a forest. At intervals the river could be traced as it wound its way through the plain, and the distant view was bounded by the towers of Windsor Castle.

Nearer could be seen the antique village of Kingston, with its reverend church.

The exceeding beauty of the river banks at this point—the verdant slopes and noble trees on the left; the lovely meads on the right—all combined to form a most exquisite picture.

XII.

HOW THEY WERE ENTERTAINED AT SHENE PALACE, AND HOW MALBOUCH, THE KING'S JESTER, CAME ON BOARD THE BARGE, AND WHAT PASSED BETWEEN HIM AND JANE.

SHORTLY afterwards, the royal manning of Shene, hitherto screened from observation by the intervening woods, came into view, and formed a most striking object with its grand facade, its immense bay windows, battlements, and turrets.

Nothing could be finer than the situation of Shene Palace, the windows of which commanded the magnificent prospect just described, while its garden and terrace extended along the margin of the river.

As the barge approached the stately pile, a boat put off from the landing-place, having on board a chamberlain and three or four serving men in the royal livery.

At a sign from the chamberlain, the barge was stopped; and the official, respectfully saluting the Lord Mayor, invited him and the rest of the party, in the King's name, to enter the palace and partake of some refreshment.

The invitation was readily accepted, and the company having landed, were conducted by the chamberlain to the great banqueting-hall, where a splendid collation was laid out for them. At the same time he explained that these preparations had been made by his Majesty's command. Half an hour being spent over the repast, the Lord Mayor and those with him returned to the barge, very well satisfied with their entertainment.

An addition was here made to the party in the person of Malbouch, the King's favourite jester. As Malbouch was proceeding to Windsor Castle to join his royal master, he

begged to be taken on board the barge, and of course his request was readily granted. Moreover, he was not placed with the other servants, but was allowed to remain on deck with the company, and he amused them very much by his caustic remarks.

Malbouche's grotesque attire proclaimed his office. On his head he wore a cockscorn, and carried a bauble in his hand. Over his shoulder was suspended a broad baldick hung with silver bells. The royal badge was embroidered in front, and at the back of his scarlet cloth tunic, which had loose hanging sleeves lined with white. His hose were parti-coloured, red and white.

Short and round-shouldered, Malbouche had an ill-favoured countenance, marked by a decidedly malicious expression, and lighted up by a pair of piercing black eyes.

Like all jesters, Malbouche was privileged to say what he pleased, even to his royal master, and he took full advantage of the license.

"What hast thou been doing at Shene, my merry knave?" said the Lord Mayor to him.

"I came here on important business, my lord," replied Malbouche. "I was sent by my royal master to see that your lordship and those with you were fittingly entertained."

"Why did his Majesty select thee for the office? Thou art scarce suited to it," observed the Lord Mayor.

"The King is a better judge than your lordship," rejoined Malbouche. "Besides, I knew that fair Mistress Shore was to be of the party, and I wished to behold her."

"Were that really thine object, thou hast come on a very foolish errand," observed Jane.

"Not so," replied Malbouche. "I rarely pay compliments. But I have seen a marvel. The King had said much of you, but all he said fell short of the truth."

"Pooh! thou art turned flatterer," remarked Jane.

"You will not think so, fair mistress, when you know me better," rejoined the jester. "The Court dames and damsels give me a very different character. Take advice, fair mistress, and stay not long at Windsor, or you are never like to return. Were I Master Shore, I would not have brought you at all."

"Then art a disloyal knave to say so," observed the goldsmith.

"And you are ever confident," replied Malbouche. "I warrant me you would not expose your brightest jewel to a band of robbers."

"Dost compare thy royal master and his nobles to a band of robbers?" observed Shore.

"An' your jewel be lost, you will cry out that it is stolen," remarked the jester.

"Why dost thou not give like caution to others besides me?" observed Shore.

"Because none of them have such a precious gem," was the rejoinder.

The goldsmith said no more, fearing the

jester might make some farther sarcastic remark calculated to give offence to the City dignitaries.

Presently, Malbouche observed to the Lord Mayor,—

"Shall I tell your lordship why you are all bidden to Windsor? 'Tis that the King expects an answer from his royal cousin, Louis of France, to whom he has sent a defiance by Garter, King-at-Arms."

"That is no secret," replied the Lord Mayor. "The citizens of London are ready and willing to aid his Majesty in a war with France. Normandy and Guienne belong to us of right, and we would gladly recover them."

"Then the King is wiser than I deemed in embarking in the war," observed the jester. "But what of James of Scotland? Will he not take advantage of the opportunity thus afforded him to invade England?"

"We have a truce with the King of Scotland," rejoined the Lord Mayor. "There is nothing to fear from him."

"If he break not the truce, I will send him my fool's cap," said Malbouche.

XIII.

HOW THE KING AND QUEEN, WITH THE LORDS AND LADIES OF THE COURT, RETURNED FROM HAWKING IN THE FOREST.

MEANWHILE, they had gradually neared Windsor Castle, and were now passing by the Home Park, the beautiful woods of which grew down to the margin of the river.

Jane had long been gazing at the proud regal structure, which she now beheld for the first time. Much as she had heard of it, its grandeur far surpassed all her preconceived notions.

From the eminence on which the lordly pile was reared, it seemed to look down majestically on the surrounding plain. The royal standard floated from the keep, and a party of armed men could be seen on the northern terrace.

On the right of the river, surrounded by trees, was the College of Eton, founded some five and thirty years previously by the unfortunate Henry VI. But Jane's gaze remained fixed upon the Castle, and she could look at nothing else till they reached the wharf near the bridge.

Here half a dozen magnificent chariots, with richly caparisoned horses attached to them, were waiting to convey the Lord Mayor and the rest of the party to the Castle. Mounted grooms and henchmen, appareled in the royal liveries, were likewise in attendance. The foremost chariot was assigned to the Lord Mayor, but at the special request of the Lady Mayress, Jane and her husband, with Mistress Forham, rode with them.

As soon as the equipages were filled, the cavalcade made its way through the old town, and, mounting the steep street that led past the walls of the Castle, came to a gateway, flanked by strong towers, leading to the basement court. They did not, however, enter the

court, but, by the directions of the officer in attendance, proceeded to the great park, where the King had pitched his pavilion.

Driving past the south terrace of the Castle, they presently turned off into a long avenue bordered by magnificent trees, and having tracked it for about a quarter of a mile, came to an opening on the right, that admitted them to a large clear space, in the midst of which was the royal pavilion. Fashioned of red velvet, lined with silk, and embroidered all over in gold, with the King's cognizance—the "rose en soleil"—it presented a superb appearance.

Accustomed to camp life, Edward liked it during fine weather; and hence, though he had the noblest castle in the realm close at hand, he chose to pitch his tent in the forest.

But the place was deserted at the time of the arrival of the Lord Mayor and his party, for his Majesty and the Queen were hawking in the forest with the lords and ladies of the court. However, the new comers had only just alighted, and were still collected in front of the royal pavilion, when word was given that the King was returning, and immediately afterwards a numerous and splendid party could be seen approaching through the trees.

At the head of the cavalcade, which comprised, as just intimated, all the principal lords and ladies of the court, as well as the two royal dukes, rode the King and Queen.

Edward was magnificently dressed, as usual. His tunic was of green velvet, embroidered with gold, and trimmed with sable. His cap was likewise of green velvet, adorned with a heron's plume, and a silver bugle hung from his shoulder. Attached to his girdle was a wood-knife. His courser was splendidly equipped, but not so much so as to impede the action of the high-mettled animal.

The Queen, who rode a snow-white palfrey, trapped in cloth of gold, embroidered with white roses, was exceedingly handsome; but her features had a very jaunty expression, and her fine eyes had sometimes a sinister look. Her tresses were still light and luxuriant, and her figure faultless. Personally, she was quite as attractive as when the King first beheld her, and became so passionately enamoured of her, that he married her despite all opposition.

To Edward's credit, it must be stated that although he had long ceased to love his consort, he paid her the utmost deference. On her part, the Queen manifested no jealousy, though quite aware of his numerous infidelities, being perfectly content with the homage he paid her in public. Owing to this judicious course, they had no quarrels, and Elizabeth never lost her influence over her royal husband. Her great desire was to aggrandize her own family; and she succeeded so well in the aim, enriching her father, ennobling her brother, and exalting her sisters by marrying them into the proudest families, that she incurred the animosity of all the old nobility. Confident, however, of

Edward's support, she set them completely at defiance.

The Queen was arrayed in a tight-fitting long-waisted *côte-hardie* of *baudekyn*. Over the gown, which was so long that it quite concealed her pointed shoes, she wore a furred mantle, which displayed her charming figure to perfection. It is needless to describe the costly ornaments with which she was bedecked, the jewels running down the centre of her gown, or the splendour of her girdle and collar; but we must mention that her hair was confined by a golden comb, with large and preposterous side ornaments, like wings, attached to it.

The Queen was attended by a score of ladies, almost all of whom were young and beautiful, and made a splendid show on their mettlesome palfreys.

The costume of these fair dames and damsels was somewhat varied, but they had one feature in common peculiar to the period—namely, the tall steeple cap.

With the Queen were the two young princesses, Elizabeth and Cicely, both very pretty girls. They rode what were then called hobby-horses, and managed them extremely well.

Mingled with the ladies of the Court were an equal number of nobles and distinguished personages, chief amongst whom were the King's two brothers, George, Duke of Clarence, and Richard, Duke of Gloucester. Neither of them possessed Edward's lofty stature, handsome physiognomy, or majestic deportment. Indeed, the Duke of Gloucester was deformed and crook-backed, by which epithet he was constantly distinguished.

The Duke of Clarence, who was not yet thirty, was slight, but well-formed, and had a noble countenance; the expression, however, of his eyes was shifting, and betrayed his treacherous character. His habiliments were splendid, and he was mounted on a fiery steed.

Some seven or eight years previously, the Duke of Clarence had espoused Isabella, eldest daughter of the great Earl of Warwick, surnamed the "King Maker," and who, in fact, had enabled Edward to obtain the crown. Soon after his alliance, the ambitious young Duke, who secretly aspired to the throne, revolted against his brother. True to no one, however, he deserted Warwick at the most critical juncture, and joining his brother with several thousand men, enabled him to win the battle of Barnet, at which Warwick was slain.

The Duchess of Clarence was amongst the ladies, but there was no cordiality between her and the Queen. At the time of her marriage, the Duchess was considered very handsome; but she now looked pale and thin, and appeared far from happy. Could she be happy, indeed, when she knew that the Duke, her husband, had betrayed her father, and caused his death?

But if Clarence was perfidious, he was not half so dangerous as his brother, the dark,

deceitful Gloucester. Clarence had not the talent to conceal his designs, but Gloucester, who was equally treacherous, was a deep dissembler, and worked in secret. Though the throne seemed completely shut out from him, he determined to mount it, and nothing turned him from his purpose.

To look at that bold, crafty visage, in every line of which cunning was written; to feel the effect of that dark, searching eye, caused those who came near him to comprehend that they were in the presence of a master spirit. Gloucester could not inspire regard; but he inspired dread. Men hated him, but served him well, because they feared him. Even Edward experienced the force of his determined will.

Gloucester would have been of the average height had not his crooked back diminished his stature by several inches. In other respects, he was well-proportioned, and strongly built. His features were decidedly handsome, though the expression was sinister. His complexion and hair were dark, and his eyes exceedingly fine, and their glances full of fire. Not only did Gloucester possess the wisdom of the serpent, but the venom. Courageous, and a good leader, he never hesitated to attack a superior force.

There was no love between him and the Duke of Clarence, whom he had deeply offended by his marriage with Anne, the younger daughter of the Earl of Warwick, and widow of Prince Edward, son of Margaret of Anjou, and the unfortunate Henry VI. Having helped to despatch the young Prince, after the battle of Tewkesbury, which sealed the fate of the Lancastrian party, Gloucester resolved to marry the Princess, and succeeded in his design, notwithstanding all the efforts of Clarence to prevent him.

By this match, Gloucester secured a large portion of Warwick's immense possessions, and laughed at his brother's displeasure. A long and bitter dispute ensued, which at length was settled by the King, but from that time the brothers nourished a deadly animosity towards each other.

Gloucester was as fond of dress as the King, and wore the richest stuffs and the most splendid ornaments. His embroidered mantle was so disposed as to hide his hunchback as much as possible. His black velvet cap was adorned with gems.

It would seem scarcely possible that the Princess Anne could endure the man who had slain her husband, and forced her into a marriage that at first had appeared hateful to her; but Gloucester had so won upon her regard, that she now seemed to like him. She was among the Queen's ladies, and rode by the side of the Duchess of Clarence.

The Princess Anne was far handsomer than her sister, and to judge from her countenance, was disturbed by no secret grief. Her attire was very sumptuous. She wore a cotte-hauble of blue velvet, and her girdle was studded with gems. Pa-

sionately fond of hawking and of the chase, she had greatly enjoyed the day's pastime.

Of the nobles who composed the King's suite, we may enumerate the Duke of Buckingham, the Marquis of Dorset, the Lord Hastings, the Lord Rivers, the Queen's brother, the Lords Howard and Stanley, Sir Thomas Montgomery, and Sir Thomas St. Leger—the latter being a great favourite with the King. All these nobles and gentlemen were attired in hunting dresses of green velvet, embroidered with gold, and were mounted on fleet, well-bred coursers.

At the rear of the cavalcade came the falconers, carrying the hawks in their hoods and jesses; and the huntsmen, with the hounds in leash. These, with a great number of grooms, piquers, and pages, completed the splendid train.

XIV.

OF THE GRAND COLLATION GIVEN IN THE PAVILION; AND OF THE STRANGE PRESENT BROUGHT BY GARTER FROM LOUIS OF FRANCE.

As the King entered the open space, and perceived the Lord Mayor and his party stationed near the royal pavilion, he rode forward, and offered them a most gracious welcome. While distributing his smiles among the happy fair dames, he bestowed a special greeting on Jane.

Shortly afterwards the Queen came up, and the Lord Mayor and the Lady Mayoress were presented by the King to her Majesty, who expressed herself delighted to see them. Some other presentations then took place, and during these formalities, the nobles and ladies composing the cavalcade dismounted, and their coursers and palfreys were led away by the grooms.

Having welcomed his guests, Edward sprang from his charger, and bidding them follow him without ceremony, took the hand of the Lady Mayoress, and conducted her to the pavilion, in which a splendid collation was laid out. They were followed by the Queen and the Lord Mayor, and pursuing the example thus set them, the royal dukes and the nobles each selected a citizen's wife, while the sheriffs and aldermen were honoured by Court dames. Jane fell to the share of the Lord Chamberlain, who took care to place her near his royal master.

Though a rigorous observer of regal etiquette, Edward would sometimes dispense with it altogether, as on this occasion, when, his great object being to conciliate the citizens, he treated them with unwonted familiarity. At the same time, though excessively affable, he was dignified in deportment, as usual.

The interior of the pavilion was splendid, as it was roofed with cloth of gold. The tables were covered with plate, and there was a superb buffet. The daintiest fare and the most exquisite wines were set before the guests.

At the close of the repast, the King caused a large goblet to be filled by his cup-bearer, and drank to the Lord Mayor and the citizens. After which, they all rose, and pledged his Majesty in return.

"You are aware, my good and faithful lieges," said the King to the citizens, "that we have sent a herald to our cousin, Louis of France, to signify to him that he must forthwith restore to us the duchies of Guienne and Normandy, and if he refuses to do so, we will make war upon him, and invade his dominions with all our power. We shall soon know what answer Louis hath sent, for Garter, the herald, as we learn, hath returned to London from his embassy, and is on the way hither."

At this juncture, Malbouche, who was stationed at the back of the King's seat, whispered something in his Majesty's ear.

"Say'st thou that Garter has arrived?" cried Edward.

"Yea, my liege," replied the jester, speaking in a loud voice, so that all around might hear. "And he hath brought your Majesty some presents. King Louis hath sent you the best horse in his stables, and a noble steed it is. But that is not all—he hath sent your Majesty something more."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Edward. "Doth he think to pacify me by gifts?"

"There is much significance in the present," replied Malbouche. "But here comes the herald, who will give your Majesty all needful explanation."

As he spoke, Garter appeared at the entrance of the pavilion, and way was made him to approach the King.

"Thou art welcome from France!" cried Edward, as the herald bent profoundly. "Hast thou made our demand of King Louis? Speak out! We desire that all should hear his answer."

"King Louis's answer was very brief, my liege," rejoined Garter. "He received me very well, and manifested neither anger nor impatience while I made my demand. When I had done, he regarded me fixedly, and somewhat sternly, and remarked, 'Tell the King our cousin that we counsel him to do nothing.' That was all he said. In token of his friendly feeling towards your Majesty, he hath sent you the best horse in his stables."

"Anght more?" inquired Edward.

"Yea, my liege," replied Garter, with some hesitation. "Just before my departure he sent his quarter-master, Messire Jean de Lailier, with a wolf, a wild boar, and an ass, as a further present to your Majesty."

"He!" exclaimed Edward, angrily. "Now, by St. George! that seems like a studied insult."

"'Twas doubtless intended as an apology," remarked Malbouche. "Methinks I can explain it. The wolf is your Majesty—a vile comparison, doubtless—the wild boar is Charles the Bold of Burgundy, and the ass is the Duke of Bretagne."

Incensed as he was, Edward could not help laughing at the jester's explanation, and some half-suppressed merriment was heard among the company.

"Our cousin of France shall find that his jest is ill-timed," said the King. "Our preparations for the invasion are complete, and, by St. George, we will soon set foot in his dominions."

At this announcement loud acclamations arose from the assemblage, and it was evident that the nobles and citizens were of one mind in regard to the war.

Soon after this, the King arose and quitted the pavilion, taking the Lady Mayoress with him. His Majesty was followed by the Queen, the Lord Mayor, and the rest of the splendid company.

Shortly afterwards, the Queen entered her chariot with the two princesses, and was driven to the Castle, whither other chariots followed, filled by the Duchesses of Clarence and Gloucester, and other noble dames.

XV.

HOW JANE PROMISED THE KING AN ANSWER AT THE BALL.

THE festivities of the day were not yet ended. A grand ball was to be given in the evening at the Castle, to which all were looking forward with delight.

A great portion of the company proceeded to the Castle on foot, and they could now be seen shaping their course thither beneath the trees.

As the evening was delightful, nothing could be more agreeable than the walk, and Jane, who was accompanied by her husband and Mistress Fordham, enjoyed it greatly.

They had just entered the great avenue, and were proceeding slowly along the gentle ascent leading to the Castle, which rose before them in all its grandeur, when the trampling of horses was heard behind, and the King was seen approaching, accompanied by Lord Hastings and some half-dozen grooms.

As soon as he came up to Jane, the King dismounted, and consigned his horse to a groom, while Hastings engaged Shore and Mistress Fordham in conversation. The grooms kept at a respectful distance.

As may be supposed, the enamoured monarch did not lose the opportunity, but protested his passion in the most ardent terms.

"You have heard what has just passed," he said. "I am about to invade France with a large army. You shall go with me, and you will then be really Queen."

Jane was dazzled by the brilliant prospect opened before her.

"Could I believe that your Majesty would really devote yourself to me, I might be induced to consent. But no, no!" she interrupted. "I must not—cannot."

"Do not decide too hastily," he said. "Give me your answer at the ball to-night."

"My answer will still be the same, my liege," she replied, trembling.

"I hope not," he rejoined. "Think what you will throw away! But I must not continue this converse, lest I should excite your husband's suspicions. Adieu for the present."

At a sign, his horse was instantly brought him by the groom, and he rode off with Hastings towards the Castle.

Meanwhile, Shore had returned to his wife. Fixing a melancholy look upon her, he said,—

"I cannot mistake the nature of his Majesty's attentions to you, Jane. He loves you, and has told you of his love."

Jane made no reply; but her silence convinced Alban Shore that he was right in the surmise.

"You must not be exposed to this danger," he said. "You shall not enter the Castle."

"You are needlessly alarmed," said Jane. "I should be sorry to miss this grand ball. To-morrow I shall be quite willing to return, but not now."

"To-morrow may be too late," muttered Shore. "I have made up my mind that you shall go at once."

"But I am quite sure the King will not permit our departure," she said.

"He will know nothing about it till we are far hence," rejoined Shore, peremptorily.

"Alice," cried Jane, to Mistress Fordham, "what do you think? Alban says we must go back immediately."

"Not stay for the ball!" exclaimed Mistress Fordham. "It would not only be a great disappointment to us, but a positive disrespect to his Majesty. Were I you, I would positively refuse to go."

"You counsel badly, mistress," remarked Shore, angrily. "Jane will obey me."

Alice gave her a look, encouraging her not to yield.

"I never knew you so unreasonable before, Alban," said Jane. "You have ever treated me with the greatest kindness and indulged all my fancies. But now you would deprive me of a gratification on which I have set my heart."

"You know my motive, Jane," he cried, in a reproachful tone.

"Yes. But I do not admit it! Dismiss these silly fears. No harm will ensue."

"Since you give me that positive assurance, I will trust in you," he said.

"Then you consent to stay for the ball?" she cried eagerly.

"Very reluctantly," he replied. "I have a presentiment of ill."

"Nonsense!" cried Mistress Fordham. "If the King really meant to rob you of your beautiful wife, do you think she would be safe in Lombard Street?"

"Make yourself easy, Alban," said Jane. "The King is very powerful, but he shall not take me from you."

"I am content with that promise," he rejoined. "We will stay for the ball."

And they proceeded to the Castle.

XVI.

HOW JOUSTS WERE HELD IN THE LOWER COURT OF WINDSOR CASTLE; HOW THE PRIZE WAS BESTOWED ON JANE BY THE MARQUIS OF DORSET; WHAT OCCURRED AT THE BALL; AND HOW SHORE LEFT HIS WIFE.

On entering the upper ward of the Castle, Shore, with his wife and Mistress Fordham, were met by the chamberlain, who conducted them to apartments on the north side of the quadrangle. Here they found their trunks, which had been brought from the barge, and by the time they had made the necessary change in their attire, they were summoned to a magnificent repast, which was served in St. George's Hall. The King and Queen, with the royal dukes and duchesses, were seated at a raised table, and in the centre of the room sat the principal nobles and ladies.

Supper over, the company adjourned to a large apartment, which was brilliantly lighted up. Jane was quite bewildered by the splendour of the scene. The King had now laid aside his mantle, and appeared in a blue velvet tunic richly embroidered with gold. Amongst his other accomplishments, Edward excelled in dancing, and on this occasion he selected his partners from the wives of the citizens.

Jane's turn came at last, and, when the bransle was over, he led her to a room opening out of the hall, which seemed to be empty at the time.

Thinking they were entirely alone, Edward addressed a few passionate words to her, and said, "Now, then, sweetheart, I must have your answer. Will you remain with me?"

Ere she could reply, they were disturbed by the unexpected appearance of Shore, who had followed her into the room.

Edward signed to him angrily to begone, but he did not move.

"I am ready to obey you, my liege," he said; "but I must take my wife with me. Come, madam," he added, to Jane, who, however, hesitated and consulted the King by a look.

"I shall not interpose my authority," said Edward. "Mistress Shore is free to depart if she thinks proper. Do as you please, madam," he added to Jane.

"Then I will stay," she rejoined.

"Since this is your decision, Jane, farewell for ever!" said Alban, in a reproachful tone. "You know how fondly I have loved you. But I now put you from me. You are no longer mine."

He looked at her for a moment fixedly, hoping she might relent; but as she did not stir, he made an obeisance to the King, and quitted the apartment.

"Do not let him go, my liege," said Jane. "I shall be miserable if he departs in this mood."

"Nonsense! you are far better without him, sweetheart," said the King; "but since you desire it, I will give orders that he be not allowed to quit the Castle."

With this, he led her back to the ball-room, and, summoning the Lord Chamberlain, gave him some directions in a low tone.

Next morning a sumptuous breakfast was given at the royal hunting lodge in the Home Park, to which all the guests were invited, and after the repast, they were taken to see the vineyard.

Our climate must certainly have been better in the fifteenth century than now-a-days, since grapes from which tolerable wine was made were then grown at Windsor.

The vineyard was situated on a slope facing the south, so that the grapes had the full benefit of the sun, and now hung in ripening clusters from the trellised vines. With the gay crowd wandering about the alleys, the enclosure presented a very charming picture.

After another banquet in St. George's Hall, the whole company repaired to the jousts. Barriers were here erected in the lower ward, and overlooking them was a superb gallery, hung with blue velvet, and embroidered with white roses. This gallery was reserved for the Queen, the two duchesses, the Court dames, the Lady Mayoress, and the wives of the citizens.

A large crowd was collected round the barriers, and the vast court was filled with knights, pages, esquires, and halberdiers, all in the royal livery.

Loud fanfares of trumpet were sounded as the King came forth, equipped in a full suit of shining mail, with a snowy plume in his helm, and mounted on a charger trapped in cloth of gold, adorned with his cognizance.

His Majesty was attended by the Duke of Buckingham, the Lords Howard, Dorset, and Stanley, Sir Thomas Montgomery, and Sir John Cheyne, all clad in armour, and all well mounted.

As soon as the King had taken his position on one side of the lists, the trumpets were again sounded, and the Duke of Clarence, the Earl of Rivers, the Lord Hastings, all clad in armour, and attended by half-a-dozen knights and gentlemen, rode into the lists.

The two parties having ridden past the central part of the gallery, in which were the Queen with the two royal duchesses and the two princesses, and bowed to her Majesty, took their places on either side of the lists. Jane sat with the ladies of the Lady Mayoress's party.

Shortly afterwards the trumpets were sounded, and the signal being given by the King, two knights clapped spurs into their steeds, and rode against each other.

These were the Lord Howard and the Lord Rivers. They met in mid career, and both lances were splintered, but neither cavalier was unhorsed.

They were followed by the Duke of Buckingham and the Earl of Hastings, with pretty nearly the same result; except, perhaps, that the advantage was slightly in favour of Hastings.

Next the Duke of Clarence and the youthful

Marquis of Dorset, the Queen's son by her first husband, Sir John Gray, ran against each other, and a general murmur of satisfaction arose, when the youthful Marquis, who was exceedingly handsome, struck off the Duke's helmet.

Clarence did not bear his defeat with a good grace, but looked highly displeased.

Many more lances were splintered, but good fortune attended the young Marquis of Dorset, who unhorsed one of the knights on the side of the Duke of Clarence, and at length was adjudged the victor by the King.

Amid the plaudits of the assemblage, the shouts of the heralds, and the clangour of trumpets, the youthful Earl rode towards the royal gallery, and as he bent before the Queen, she hung a wreath of white roses on the point of his lance.

The handsome young noble glanced round the bevy of beauties, as if considering on whom he should bestow the prize, and many a bosom throbbled high at that moment; but as there could be no question that the fairest amid the throng was Jane, he rode up to the part of the gallery where she was stationed, and, lowering the point of his lance, presented the wreath to her.

Loud applause followed, as Jane took the prize thus gracefully offered her, and the King seemed particularly well pleased.

Some other diversions followed, after which the Queen and all the ladies withdrew, and returned to their apartments in the Castle.

In the evening there was a grand supper in St. George's Hall, and when the company had feasted royally, a pleasant surprise was given to the ladies.

The great doors of the hall being thrown open, a troop of sirens came in, singing melodiously. They were followed, after a short interval, by an immense sea-monster, which, from its size, caused the greatest astonishment and even terror among the female beholders. How the huge fish was moved could not be understood, the mechanism being hidden; but it seemed to roll, or rather swim, into the hall, without even being guided, only moving its tail and fins.

On reaching the centre of the hall, the monster opened its enormous jaws, and forth came a troop of mermaids and mermen, who performed a grotesque dance, while the sirens sang, amid the merriment of the company.

This exhibition ended, the dancers returned to their retreat, and the huge sea-monster quickly disappeared from the hall.

Other amusements followed, after which the company adjourned to the ball-room, where dancing instantly commenced.

No opportunity occurred to the King that night for any private converse with Jane; but next morning, at an early hour, he repaired to her apartment.

Mistress Rotherham was with her, but she seemed to be in a state of great distress, and when Edward appeared, she rushed towards him, and threw herself at his feet.



THE MEETING OF KING EDWARD AND THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY. (See page 36.)

"My husband has really left me, my liege," she cried, "and has forbidden me to return to him."

"Give yourself no concern about him," he replied, raising her gently. "You shall remain with me. Listen to me, sweetheart," he continued. "You like the Hunting Lodge in the Home Park? Is it not so?"

"I have seen nothing so charming, my liege," she replied.

"'Tis yours. Take possession of it at once. You shall have your own servants, and everything you can desire. Thus much for Windsor. At Shene, at Whitehall, at Eltham, at the Tower, wherever I may be, you shall have your own apartments."

Her thanks were murmured in a low voice.

"My sole desire is to make you happy, Jane," he said.

Something like a sigh was her response.

"Why that sigh?" he inquired, gazing at her tenderly.

"I am thinking of poor Alban," she replied.

"Think of him no more," said Edward. "You are now mine, and shall be ever with me. When I embark for France you shall accompany me."

"And your Majesty will not abandon me?" cried she, gazing at him imploringly.

"Never," cried Edward, fervently. "Never! I swear it!"

"Bear witness to the vow, Alice," cried Jane.

"Ay, bear witness!" said Edward; "and call me false and perjured if I break it. But that I will never do."

"I will trust you," replied Jane, and her head sank upon his shoulder.

Ever many hours she was installed at the Hunting Lodge.

BOOK THE SECOND.

THE EXPEDITION TO FRANCE.

I.

HOW JANE RESIDED AT THE HUNTING LODGE IN THE HOME PARK, AND HOW KING EDWARD PREPARED TO INVADE FRANCE.

"THE King seems infatuated with Mistress Shore," observed the Duke of Buckingham to Lord Hastings, as they walked together one morning in the upper quadrangle of Windsor Castle. "Think you she will retain her influence over him?"

"For many reasons, I think she will," replied Hastings. "In the first place, she is incomparably beautiful, and beauty weighs much with the King, as you know. But she has something more than beauty to recommend her. Her disposition is most amiable, and her manner extremely engaging. She is always ready to do a service to any one who needs it. Her influence over the King is unbounded, but she does not abuse it. What is most surprising is that she has embraced the Queen's part, and does all in her power to further her Majesty's plans."

"Is it from interest of good feeling that she acts thus?" inquired Buckingham. "You know I have been away, so that I have not yet had any opportunity for observation."

"'Tis from goodness of heart," replied Hastings. "Mrs. Shore, as I have just said, is the most amiable person living. She has more suitors than the Queen herself. Everyone who has a favour to ask, or a petition to present, comes to her. The King can refuse her nothing; yet she asks little for herself. She might soon grow rich if she chose; but she gives away almost all she receives. His Majesty bestows the richest dresses upon her, costly ornaments, diamonds and plate, and has given her an almost regal establishment at the Lodge; but, by my faith! I believe she does not desire it, but would rather live less ostentatiously."

"You amaze me," said Buckingham. "I did not think such a woman existed."

"Curtis, there are few like her," rejoined Hastings, laughing. "She has many enemies, no doubt, foremost among whom are Clarence and Gloucester; but they are unable to do her any injury. The Queen, as I have hinted,

is favourable to her, and wisely declares that as the King must have a favourite, she would rather it should be Mistress Shore than any other."

"But what of Shore? Is he reconciled to the loss of his beautiful wife?"

"Since she has left him, he has disappeared altogether," replied Hastings.

"Disappeared!" exclaimed Buckingham.

"Ay, he has sold his house in Lombard Street, all his plate and jewels, has discharged all his servants, and gone—no one knows whither. 'Tis said he has become a monk, but this is doubtful. He was devoted to his wife, and her abandonment of him seems to have disturbed his reason."

"Only a fool would grieve for a woman who leaves him," said Buckingham. "A sensible husband would have reconciled himself to the loss, and have reaped all the benefit he could from it. With Jane's help he might have risen at Court."

"Evidently he disdained such a course. But let us go to the Lodge. You will find the King there. His Majesty desires that as much respect shall be paid Mistress Shore as if she were actually Queen."

"I understand," replied Buckingham.

Passing through the postern near Edward the Third's tower, and crossing the drawbridge over the moat, they proceeded to the Lodge, which was situated in the Home Park.

A pleasant walk through the vineyard brought them to the garden, which was beautifully laid out.

On the terrace in front of the Hunting Lodge, several pages in the royal liveries were grouped, conversing with the King's falconers, who had their hawks in readiness. On the right were grooms, with a splendid charger and a beautiful palfrey. Halberdiers were stationed at the entrance, and within were a gentleman usher, and a number of serving-men.

Preceded by the usher, the two nobles gained the private apartments, and entered an antechamber, crowded with courtiers and suitors, who bowed respectfully as the distinguished personages passed through their midst.

The Lord Chamberlain and his companion were then admitted to an inner room, where they found the King and Jane.

Seated in a velvet-covered fauteuil, in an easy attitude, with his foot on a tabouret, Edward was glancing at a letter which he held in his hand, and Jane was leaning over his shoulder. The attitude was well calculated to display the grace and beauty of her figure. She was attired in a tight-fitting cote-hardie of green velvet, with a girdle above the hips, and her sunny tresses were covered by a net of gold. Edward simply wore a tunic of embroidered satin, and had a black velvet cap on his head.

At a little distance from the King was Malbouche, the jester, who was playing with a small monkey, fastened to a stand.

On entering, the two nobles made a profound obeisance to the King, and did not neglect to salute the royal favourite.

"You are welcome, my Lord of Buckingham," said Edward. "I am right glad to see you back."

"Your Majesty will be pleased to learn that I bring with me five hundred archers," replied the Duke. "They are now encamped with the rest of the army on Blackheath, and await your Majesty's orders."

"Tis well," replied Edward. "We shall now be able to muster fifteen thousand mounted archers, besides ten thousand foot soldiers. In a few days I shall march the whole army to Dover, where the embarkation will take place. I have just received a letter from my brother of Burgundy, wherein he promises to send me five hundred flat Dutch boats for transportation of the horses to Calais. Our own ships will convey the men-at-arms and ordnance."

"I hope your Majesty will be able to land all the men in safety," said Hastings. "Louis has several men-of-war at Boulogne, and he may capture some of our transports."

"Heaven forbid!" exclaimed Jane.

"I suppose you would dissuade his Majesty from this expedition, madam?" remarked Buckingham.

"Your Grace is mistaken," she replied. "I would have him go on with it, unless his terms are agreed to. Having defied the King of France, he cannot honourably withdraw."

"If I conquer France, I will make you a Countess, sweetheart," said Edward, "and give you a castle in Touraine, with a proud domain attached to it."

"I would rather have this hunting-lodge than any castle in France," she replied.

"Peradventure your Majesty may not get beyond Calais," remarked Malbouche. "I have no great faith in your two potent allies, the Duke of Burgundy and the Duke of Bretagne."

"Neither have I," said Jane. "I fear they may play you false."

"I will hedge them, sweetheart. 'Tis their interest to be true to me. They are both bound to London."

"Your Majesty has determined to

commence the embarkation forthwith," said Buckingham, "this time that a portion of the army should march to Dover. I will take my five hundred archers thither without delay, if your Majesty desires it."

"You shall take thrice that number, my lord," said Edward, "and Hastings shall follow with as many more. Ere a week is out, the whole army shall assemble at Dover."

"Whom think you, my lords, his Majesty is about to take with him to France, and at my suggestion?" observed Jane.

"A score of young knights, who will all wear your colours," rejoined Buckingham.

"A score of the wealthiest citizens in London," replied Jane.

"With what object?" demanded the Duke, surprised.

"To show them honour, and make them witnesses of the enterprise," said Edward.

"These fat and well-fed citizens will never be able to endure the fatigues of war," observed Hastings.

"Then their voices will be for peace," said the jester; "and should his Majesty require another loan—as most assuredly he will—they will help him to raise it."

Some further discussion ensued respecting the march of the army to Dover, after which the two nobles departed, and the King and Jane rode out into the Great Park, attended only by the falconers and a couple of mounted grooms.

II.

HOW KING EDWARD EMBARKED WITH HIS FORCES AT DOVER, AND HOW HE WAS RECEIVED AT CALAIS.

ERE a week had flown, Edward reached Dover with his whole army.

On the morning after his arrival, he mounted to the ramparts of the ancient castle, to watch the embarkation of the troops. He was attended only by a young esquire and a page, both remarkable for good looks and symmetry of person.

From the lofty post he had chosen, the French coast was perfectly distinguishable, and even the tower of Notre Dame de Calais, with some of the buildings of the town, could be seen.

But the King's attention was chiefly attracted by what was going on in the harbour.

To a military spectator, the crowd of vessels there collected would have presented a most singular and striking appearance. The larger ships were exceedingly lofty, and stood so high out of the water, that they might be compared to floating castles. They were richly gilded, and the royal ensignance was not only displayed at the sides, but painted on the sails.

These ships of force, as they were designated, had four masts—the in front and two near the stern. The masts were painted and gilt. The sails were white. The fore-castle and mainmast were painted on

the summit of which archers and archers could be stationed.

The King's own ship, the *Rose Blanche*, as she was called, could be easily distinguished among her companions from her superior height and splendour. Her stately sides were embellished with the royal arms; the royal standard was hoisted at the prow; and the masts were hung with small flags of beaten gold.

Though these ancient vessels cannot be compared in point of utility with ironclads and modern "leviathans of the deep," it must be allowed that their appearance was infinitely more magnificent and imposing.

Beside the large ships, there were vast numbers of smaller vessels—picturesque looking galleys, with a high crook, surmounted by a carved figure, with the rudder at the side, and a short strong mast, having a sort of cage at the top, in which armed men could be placed; barges, balingers, pinnaces, and carvels.

Then there were certain long vessels, called *huissieres*, having two rows of oars, with doors and bridges, for the transport of horses; and, in addition to these, there were the five hundred flat-bottomed Dutch boats sent by the Duke of Burgundy.

No grander spectacle can be imagined than was now offered to the King, and the sea being almost as calm as a lake, the fleet could be seen to the greatest advantage. Even in the days of Edward III., and the Black Prince, no such armament had ever been provided for the invasion of France as was now collected.

But in other respects the picture was exceedingly lively and interesting. Not only were the inner and outer courts of the castle filled with men-at-arms and archers, but the cliffs were covered with troops, as were the quay and the beach.

Knights and esquires were constantly riding to and fro, bringing companies of foot-soldiers to the quay, to be conveyed thence in small boats to the pinnaces and carvels, and hundreds of horses were put on board the *huissieres* and Dutch boats.

Having contemplated this exciting scene with the greatest interest for more than an hour, Edward quitted the ramparts, and attended by the young esquire and the page just alluded to, and whom he addressed as Isidore and Claude, mounted his horse, and rode down to the harbour, to superintend the proceedings in person.

But though the King's presence stimulated the men to greater exertions, the embarkation did not go on rapidly, and the whole fleet could not be got ready to sail before the following morning.

The flat-bottomed boats, containing the horses and artillery, and which were propelled by oars, had been previously sent off, but they moved very slowly and had not made more than a couple of leagues.

While remaining on the beach for several hours, the King returned to the castle. The

two pages, from the richness of their attire and grace of person, had excited considerable attraction. Isidore, the chief of them, had evinced great interest in the embarkation.

Next morning, at an early hour, amid the roar of cannon from the castle, the clangour of trumpets, and the beating of drums, the King went on board the *Rose Blanche*, which looked like a gorgeous pavilion, the fore-castle and cabin being hung with cloth of gold and arras, and the deck carpeted with velvet.

Amongst the distinguished persons already assembled on board the royal vessel, were the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, Thomas of Rotherham, Bishop of Lincoln and Lord High Chancellor; the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Northumberland, the Lords Dorset, Hastings, Stanley, and Howard, Sir Thomas Montgomery, Sir Thomas St. Leger, and other knights and esquires.

Somewhat removed from these important personages were Dr. Morton, the King's chaplain and confessor, and the King's physician and almoner.

Edward was very sumptuously attired, and was attended by the young esquires, Isidore and Claude. Malbouche the jester was likewise in attendance upon his royal master.

Shortly afterwards, the signal was given, and amid another roar of ordnance from the castle, that made the cliffs echo, the whole of the mighty armament was put in motion.

The sight was truly splendid. Already the galleys, balingers, pinnaces, and carvels, which were crowded with knights, esquires, archers, and men-at-arms, were in movement, and they were now followed by the larger vessels.

Close beside the *Rose Blanche* was another large and richly-ornamented ship called the *Asincourt*, on board which were the wealthy citizens invited by the King to accompany the expedition. All these personages were now on deck, and gazing with admiration at the spectacle.

Never from the heights of Dover had so grand a spectacle been witnessed as was then beheld.

The weather was most propitious, the day being brilliantly fine, with just sufficient wind blowing from the right quarter to waft the fleet across the Channel.

After a time, as the sun became hot, a rich awning was drawn over the deck, and a splendid repast was served, to which the King and all the principal personages sat down.

Edward was waited upon by the two pages, and being somewhat self-indulgent, did not quit the table till the towers and walls of Calais came in sight.

Almost immediately after the *Rose Blanche* had quit anchor, Lord Walslock, the Lieutenant-Governor of Calais, attended by several officers, came on board.

Finding the King surrounded by nobles, he went the knee before him, and said,—

"You are welcome, my liege. All is ready for your Majesty, and those with you, in your loyal town of Calais."

"I thank you, my lord," replied Edward, graciously. "But what of my good brother of Burgundy? Has he arrived at Calais, and what number of men-at-arms hath he brought with him?"

"I have not such good tidings to give of the Duke of Burgundy as I could desire, my liege," replied Lord Wenlock, rising. "His Grace has raised the siege of Neuse, and has taken his army into Lorraine. But as yet he hath sent no men to Calais, nor hath he come hither himself."

"Ah! by St. George! this is strange!" exclaimed Edward, looking greatly surprised and displeased. "His Highness promised to meet me at my landing with three thousand mounted men-at-arms, and a large body of foot, and you say none have arrived?"

"My liege, it is as I tell you," replied Lord Wenlock. "The Duke of Burgundy hath taken the whole of his army into Lorraine."

A murmur of displeasure arose from the nobles grouped around.

"Then he has broken his treaty with me," cried Edward, angrily. "He stipulated to find me ten thousand men. But what of the Constable St. Pol, and the Duke of Bretagne?"

"Would that I could give you good tidings of them, my liege!" replied Lord Wenlock. "As yet, they have done nothing."

"And they will do nothing," said the Duke of Gloucester. "Your Majesty has been deceived by false promises."

"So it would seem," cried Edward. "But I can stand alone."

"Better alone than with such perfidious allies," said Gloucester.

"This is a grievous disappointment," remarked Clarence, "and will give confidence to Louis."

"Your Majesty will design to listen to my advice, you will turn back without landing," said Mulbouché.

"Peace, thou foolish varlet!" cried the young esquire, who was standing behind the King. "His Majesty would scorn thy counsel. Though King Louis were before Calais with all his army, our royal master would land and give him battle."

"Thou art right, Isidore," said Edward. "Our plans are in no way changed by these untoward circumstances. We shall prosecute the war with as much vigour as if the Duke of Burgundy had been here to join us. Return at once, my lord," he added to the Governor, "and prepare for our entrance into the town."

Thereupon Lord Wenlock departed, and as soon as his boat touched the strand, a great stir was observable among the crowd assembled on the quay.

Great shouts arose, and repeated discharges of cannon took place. The royal standard of England was hoisted above the Lantern Gate towards the port, and another broad banner

floated above the tower of the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Calais.

Meanwhile a considerable number of archers, men-at-arms, and horses had been very expeditiously landed from some of the transports, and these were now collected on the quay.

All being at last in readiness, a splendid bark came out for the King and his nobles; and as Edward stepped upon the landing-place, which was covered with velvet, he was met by the Mayor of Calais, and the heads of the Municipal Council, in their robes, who bent the knee before him, and offered him the keys of the town on a velvet cushion.

This ceremony gone through, a procession was quickly formed, at the head of which marched the Mayor and the Municipal Council.

These authorities were followed by the Lieutenant-Governor on horseback, wearing a richly-furred mantle.

Fortunately, the citizens of London had landed in time to join the procession, and they followed Lord Wenlock.

A body-guard of mounted archers preceded the King, who rode a milk-white charger, and wore a crimson velvet surcoat, lined with ermine. On his right side walked Isidore, and on the left Claude.

Behind his Majesty came the two royal dukes, with the whole of the nobles who had been in attendance upon him during the voyage, while another troop of archers brought up the rear of the procession.

In such state, amid the roar of cannon, the ringing of bells, the beating of drums, and loud flourishes of trumpets, intermingled with the shouts of the inhabitants, Edward entered Calais by the Lantern Gate, and proceeded to the cathedral, where he offered up thanks for his safe voyage, and invoked heaven's aid for his arms.

On that night, the King and his suite were lodged at the Hotel de Ville, which had been prepared for his Majesty's reception.

III.

HOW THE ENGLISH ARMY WAS ENCAMPTED WITHOUT THE WALLS OF CALAIS; AND HOW ISIDORE, THE YOUNG ESQUIRE, WAS SENT ON A SECRET MISSION TO KING LOUIS.

NEXT day the disembarkation commenced, and was conducted with the greatest possible dispatch. As may be imagined, the greatest confusion prevailed in the port; but at length, the whole of the men and horses were safely landed, and took up their quarters in the camp, which was formed outside the walls of the town.

Never before had so large an English army been seen in France as was now collected at Calais. There were fifteen hundred men-at-arms—most of them gentlemen—mounted on strong barded horses. Besides these, there were fifteen thousand archers, all well equipped and well mounted, and above four thousand foot soldiers—making a total of

upwards of twenty thousand men. No wonder those who beheld this mighty host, commanded by a warlike monarch, who had gained almost every battle he had fought, predicted the conquest of France. But Edward himself was not altogether so sanguine, and felt greatly mortified that he had been deserted by the Duke of Burgundy, on whose aid he counted.

Seen from the old walls of Calais, the English camp presented a most striking sight. Laid out in long lines, the tents extended for more than a mile among the sandy dunes. The ground was not all that could be desired, but none better offered. The camp was divided into six quarters, four of which were allotted to the horsemen, as being the most numerous, and two to the footmen. Through the midst of the tents ran a broad street, and in the centre of the camp a large square was reserved for the assembling of the troops. Another place, surrounded by palisades, was appointed for the horses; and near the market-place was an entrenched spot, designed for the munition of the ordnance.

Besides the ordinary tents, there were others much larger and handsomer, in which the knights and officers were lodged. Bell-shaped and fashioned of rich stuff, these tents were surmounted by banners, emblazoned with the arms of their occupants.

But the most splendid feature of the camp, and which threw all else into the shade, was the royal pavilion, which was placed in a commanding situation near the town. This superb tent attracted universal attention. Its size was equal to its splendour. It consisted of five of the largest tents or pavilions, composed of cloth of gold, and connected by covered passages, so as to form a palace of immense extent, and comprehending every convenience. This will be understood when we state that each of the five grand pavilions had a smaller tent attached to it on either side, and only separated by curtains from the other part of the structure.

The interior of this gorgeous silken palace was truly regal and magnificent, and constituted a series of splendid apartments, in which the two royal dukes, with the Lord High Chancellor and all the nobles and knights in immediate attendance upon the King, could be lodged. Here also were lodged the wealthy citizens of London, whom Edward had invited to accompany him on his warlike expedition to France. Here the luxurious monarch could be served with as much state and splendour as if he had been at Windsor Castle. Here he banqueted daily; a long table, decked with vessels of silver, being laid in the central pavilion, which was hung with cloth of gold.

Externally this grand pavilion presented a splendid appearance, each angle of the roof being ornamented by gilt heraldic devices, representing the King's badges—the falcon within a fetterlock, the rose and sun, a white hart, a white wolf, a cable dragon, and a bull—each holding a small flag,

Thus splendidly housed, Edward could well afford to wait for a few days for the Duke of Burgundy, but as the Duke came not, he waxed impatient, and determined to commence the campaign without him.

Before doing so, however, he judged it proper to send another herald to Louis, who was then at Compiègne with his army, and he was about to give orders to this effect, when the young squire, Isidore, who chanced to be alone with his royal master at the time, said,—

"Your Majesty may smile, but the proposition I am about to make is perfectly serious. You will do well to send me to King Louis. I am firmly persuaded that I can obtain an advantageous treaty of peace for your Majesty."

"Thou negotiate a treaty!" exclaimed Edward, laughing incredulously.

"Yes, I," replied Isidore. "I should proceed very differently from any herald or ambassador your Majesty might send, and I think I should succeed. Although you have brought this vast army to France, I am well aware that your Majesty does not desire the war, but would rather come to a pacific arrangement, if it can be effected on satisfactory terms."

"Very true," remarked Edward.

"I am equally certain that Louis is of the same opinion," pursued Isidore. "He, too, desires peace; and I am very much mistaken if he will not make large sacrifices to obtain it."

"Nay, forsooth, he will not part with any portion of his kingdom, or even a small town—such as Boulogne—unless it be wrested from him," said Edward; "but he will do much to avoid a war, which he must perceive is inevitable unless he comes to terms."

"He cannot doubt that you are in earnest, and after all the preparations you have made," said Isidore. "He will therefore be ready to pay a large sum to get rid of you. What will your Majesty accept?"

"A hundred thousand crowns down before I will conclude a peace with him," said Edward.

"Is that all?" asked Isidore.

"No; I shall require an annuity of fifty thousand crowns; and a marriage must be contracted between the Dauphin and my eldest daughter, the Princess Elizabeth. On such terms I may consent to take back my army to England."

"I am of opinion that I can obtain these terms for your Majesty," replied Isidore.

"You are very confident," observed the King. "But, for many reasons, I cannot trust you with the mission. The matter is too important."

"If I fail, no harm will be done," said Isidore. "But I shall not fail."

"You are aware of the risk you will incur in the journey to Compiègne? I can only send a very small guard with you."

"A small guard will suffice. I feel sure I shall arrive in safety."

"Since you are bent upon the expedition,

"I will not oppose you," said Edward. "You shall have my signet ring," he added, taking a large ring from his finger. "Show this to my brother Louis, and it will convince him that you come from me, and are empowered to treat with him."

"I understand," replied Isidore, as he took the ring. "Claude must accompany me."

"Be sure I shall not send you without your friend and companion," replied Edward, smiling. "But you ought to take Malhouche as well, for you are going on a fool's errand. However, all shall be ready for you and Claude to-morrow morning—horses and attendants. Moreover, a guide shall be found well acquainted with the country, and on whom you may place perfect reliance, and a safe-conduct shall be prepared for you and your attendants."

"I am greatly beholden to your Majesty for allowing me to undertake this expedition," said Isidore, joyfully. "I scarcely expected you would consent."

"You are wilful, and must have your way; but I shall never forgive myself if harm should befall you," said the King.

At an early hour next morning, a little party on horseback set forth from the camp, and took the road towards Ardres and St. Omer.

The party consisted of three well-mounted men-at-arms, at the head of whom rode the young esquire, attended by Claude. Both wore green velvet riding-dresses embroidered with gold, green velvet caps, and morocco boots; and each was armed with sword and dagger. They were provided with mettlesome jennets, which they managed like perfect cavaliers; and to judge from their manner, they evidently did not think any danger attended the adventure they had undertaken.

Cyriac Franklin, the principal man-at-arms, had been specially enjoined by the King to take charge of Isidore and his companion. He was strongly-built, and had a resolute look.

The party rode on through the flat and uninteresting country near Calais, then as now intersected by dykes, and had proceeded for about three leagues, when they descried a small party of horsemen advancing towards them at a rapid pace.

The leader of this little troop, whose appearance proclaimed his exalted rank, was a very powerful-looking personage, and rode a superb war-horse.

He was clad in a complete suit of polished mail, encrusted with gold, and the crest on his helm was formed by a golden lion. Over his shoulders was a crimson velvet mantle lined with ermine, and from his neck depended the order of the Toison d'or. His features, which could be easily distinguished, since his visor was raised, were strongly marked, and had an exceedingly proud, almost fierce, expression. His complexion was swarthy, and his eyes black and glaring.

As he came up, he glanced inquiringly at the young esquire, and seemed inclined to stop and question him, but suddenly changing his mind, he rode on.

Isidore, who had borne the knight's scrutiny as well as he could, now turned to Cyriac, and said, "Mistake that is the Duke of Burgundy."

"You are right!" replied the other. "'Tis Charles the Bold, in person."

The young esquire and the page exchanged glances.

"I am glad we had started before the Duke reached the camp," remarked Isidore. "Had he seen the King he might have prevented our journey."

"'Tis fortunate he did not guess our errand, or he might have compelled us to turn back," said Claude.

Leaving them for the present, we will follow the Duke of Burgundy to the English camp.

Aware of the great dissatisfaction felt at his conduct by the English soldiers, the Duke had need of all his hardihood to confront them; but though menacing looks were constantly thrown at him, he rode slowly through the camp, and stopped not till he came to the royal pavilion.

He then dismounted, and leaving his charger with one of his men, entered the pavilion, and commanded the usher, who advanced to meet him, to conduct him at once to the King.

The usher bowed low, and led him ceremoniously through a sort of gallery filled with nobles and knights, who bowed reverently as the Duke passed with haughty step, and then drawing aside a curtain of arras, which masked the entrance to a side tent, ushered the princely visitor into the presence of the King.

IV.

HOW CHARLES THE BOLD ARRIVED AT THE ENGLISH CAMP; AND OF HIS INTERVIEW WITH KING EDWARD IN THE ROYAL PAVILION.

CHARLES, Duke of Burgundy, one of the most renowned princes of his epoch, and well deserving of the surname he had acquired of *Le Téméraire*, was in the full vigour of manhood, being only just turned forty.

Temperate and abstemious, almost to a fault, the Duke could not control the terrible fits of anger to which a fierce and violent temper rendered him liable, and he frequently indulged in acts of savage barbarity, apparently inconsistent with a generous and noble nature, such as he once possessed. But his disposition had become hardened and unrelenting by the constant warfare in which he was engaged, and he seemed resolved to render himself feared rather than beloved.

Ever since he succeeded his father, Philip the Good, Charles the Bold had been continually at war with Louis XI., whom he detested because he felt himself inferior to that monarch in dignity and power, and he repeatedly declared that he would not rest till he had subdued the French King. Despite this threat, he entered into several treaties with the crafty Louis, and even received a large bribe from him to discontinue the war.



A ROYAL SURPRISE. (See page 50.)

but the treaties were broken almost as soon as made.

Charles the Bold's warlike ambition and warlike tendencies would not allow him to remain tranquil, and he was ever planning some new campaign. Firmly believing in his own great military capacity, he would never allow that he had been fairly defeated, and in the latter part of his career, after the disastrous battle of Granson, a deep dejection seized him. But at the time of his introduction to the reader, though he had sustained several reverses, his confidence in himself was entirely unshaken. He had given numberless proofs of the greatest intrepidity, and at the battle of Montlhéry, when he was surrounded by the enemy, he performed prodigies of valour.

Eleven years prior to our story, the Duke of Burgundy espoused Margaret of York, sister to the King of England, at that time remarkable for her beauty. Subsequently to the marriage, Edward sent him the Order of the Garter.

Charles the Bold was warmly attached to his royal brother-in-law, and when Edward was driven from his dominions by Warwick, and compelled to take refuge in Holland, the Duke furnished him with money and ships, and enabled him to regain his kingdom.

For this aid Edward naturally felt grateful, and promised to aid Charles in his ambitious designs against Louis. On his part, the Duke was most urgent that his royal brother-in-law should invade France, doubtless anticipating that he himself would reap the real harvest of the war.

Incited by the Duke's representations of an easy conquest, Edward got together a large army, as we have related; but in the meantime, Charles, from some unaccountable caprice, had laid siege to Neuss—a strongly-fortified town on the Rhine, not far from Cleves—and failing in his attempt to take it, turned his arms against the Duke of Lorraine, who had been induced by the wily Louis to declare war against him.

This was the ostensible reason why the Duke of Burgundy had not joined his royal brother-in-law at Calais, according to his promise.

Two finer looking men than Charles the Bold and Edward of England could not be seen. Yet there was not the slightest personal resemblance between them. Both were of lofty stature, but Edward was the taller of the two, and had the most graceful figure. Moreover, his features were far handsomer than the Duke's.

Charles had a noble cast of countenance, but his deportment, though haughty, was exceedingly dignified; but his stern look inspired uneasiness—even terror. His person was well-made, but robust, and indicated great strength.

Showered from head to foot in shining mail, he wore his harness as easily as a velvet jerkin. For a few moments he stood there, with his

left hand upon the hilt of his lengthy sword, looking steadily at Edward, as if uncertain how he should be received.

Edward did not embrace the Duke, or even offer him his hand, but saluting him coldly, said, "Soh! you are come at last, brother!"

"It is not my fault that I have not been here sooner," replied the Duke. "I have lost sixteen thousand men before Neuss, and was compelled to send the remains of my shattered army into Lorraine."

Edward regarded him intently.

"From the steps you have taken, brother," he said, "it would seem that you are more anxious to make the conquest of Lorraine than to aid me in the conquest of France."

"Mistake me not, brother," rejoined Charles the Bold. "I have been compelled to change my plans. I will be better now that we should not join our forces, but make war separately. Indeed we have no choice, since the country has been so devastated by Louis, that both armies could not find sufficient food."

"But why did you allow Louis to lay waste the country?" demanded Edward.

"I could not prevent him," said Charles, angrily.

"No; because you were occupied on the Rhine, instead of being here according to your promise," cried Edward.

"Calm yourself, brother, and listen to me," said the Duke. "This is what I propose. While you pass the Somme, and proceed by way of Laon and Soissons, I will drive the Duke of Lorraine from Luxembourg, and after possessing myself of Bar and Lorraine, will meet you at my good city of Rheims, where you can be crowned King of France."

"The plan pleases me not," rejoined Edward. "Since you seem to forget the terms of our treaty, I must remind you of them. It was agreed that I should pass over into France at the head of an army of ten thousand men, well armed and well equipped, while you were to assist me in person with all your forces to accomplish the invasion. As soon as war was declared we were to march together and attack the common enemy in all convenient places; and in the event of the conquest of France, it was agreed that I should bestow upon you the Duchy of Bar, the counties of Champagne, Hovers, Ru, Guise, the barony of Dunoy, with all the towns on both banks of the Somme."

"I have not forgotten our agreement," rejoined Charles.

"I have not done," pursued Edward. "On your part, you expressly undertook to furnish for the war an army of twenty thousand men. Where are they?"

Charles made a movement of impatience.

"I must tell you plainly, brother, that your extraordinary conduct is viewed with the deepest dissatisfaction by my nobles, my knights, and my men. They do not understand why you should engage in another war at this particular juncture. If they were

surprised that you should baggage Neuss, they are still more astonished that you should attack Lorraine."

"I owe your nobles and knights no explanation," remarked the Duke, sternly.

"But you owe me one, brother," rejoined Edward. "I am not satisfied."

"You are angry with me without reason," said Charles. "All will yet go well. I have just received a letter from the Constable Saint Pol, in which he promises to deliver up Saint Quentin to you. Furthermore, he engages to serve me and all my allies—especially your Majesty—against all enemies. I will place his letter in your hands. Are you now content with me?"

Without making any direct reply, Edward took the despatch, and said, "I will assemble my council at once, and you shall meet them."

"Hold me excused, brother," replied the Duke. "I have come hither at the greatest inconvenience to myself, in order to explain matters to you personally, and I now desire to return to my camp in Lorraine without delay."

"By Saint George! you shall not go, brother, even if I forcibly detain you!" cried Edward, in a determined tone. "Your sudden arrival, and hasty departure, would have an injurious effect on the army. I will march forthwith to Peronne; and you shall accompany me thither!"

"Since you will have it so, I yield to your request," replied the Duke, though with evident reluctance. "But there must be no needless delay. Commence the march as soon as you can."

"The camp shall be struck to-morrow morn," said Edward. "I will give immediate orders to that effect."

He was about to summon an attendant, when Charles stopped him.

"There is a slight matter that I would fain mention to you, brother," said the Duke, regarding him fixedly. "As I came hither, about three leagues hence, on the road to Guines, I encountered a handsome young esquire, with a page and two or three men-at-arms, who evidently came from your camp."

"How know you that?" said Edward, sharply.

"The men were clearly English, and so was their leader," replied Charles. "Whither were they bound?"

"You should have questioned them yourself, brother," replied Edward, carelessly.

"It struck me afterwards that the youth might be a messenger to Louis," remarked Charles, still keeping his eyes fixed on the King.

"If I sent a messenger to Louis, he would not be a youth, such as you describe," replied Edward. "I can give you no information respecting him."

Though by no means satisfied, Charles made no further remark.

A council of war was then summoned at

which the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, with all the principal nobles, were present.

Charles the Bold repeated all he had said to the King, and his explanation appeared satisfactory to every one save Gloucester.

The letter from the Constable Saint Pol, which it may be proper to mention, was under to the Queen of England, was laid before the council, and the promises contained in it, apparently made in good faith, dispelled much of the distrust hitherto felt.

At the close of the meeting, the citizens of London were presented to the Duke of Burgundy by the King, and were received by Charles with the utmost courtesy.

After surveying the camp, so soon to be broken up, the King and the Duke, who seemed now to have come to a perfectly good understanding, entered Calais, and proceeded to the church of Notre Dame, where they both alighted and made their prayers at the high altar.

A grand banquet in the royal pavilion concluded the day; and at this splendid entertainment were present not only all the important personages who had accompanied the King in the expedition, but the Mayor and most worshipful citizens of Calais, as well as the much-honoured citizens of London.

V.

HOW KING EDWARD MARCHED HIS ARMY TO PERONNE; AND HOW THE CONSTABLE SAINT POL REFUSED HIM ADMITTANCE TO SAINT QUENTIN.

By noon next day, all preparations being completed, the camp was struck, and the march of the army commenced into Artois. The first division was led by the King, who was accompanied by Charles the Bold, the Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Hastings, and attended by the spearmen of Calais, in black velvet gowns, and having mussy chains round their necks.

Owing to the immense number of baggage waggon and other equipages, together with the long train of artillery, the progress of the army across the marshy land in the neighbourhood of Calais was exceedingly slow, and the main body did not get beyond Ardres.

The first division, however, reached Saint Omer; but Edward, at the suggestion of the Duke of Burgundy, who represented to him that the inhabitants would be greatly inconvenienced, did not enter the town.

Towards evening, next day, the whole army arrived at Arras; and Edward, despite the Duke's remonstrances, took possession of the Hotel de Ville, and quartered the brigade under his own immediate command upon the town's people.

Bapaume formed the limit of the next day's march; and on the fourth day, Peronne was reached.

In the immediate vicinity of this strongly fortified town, situated on the north bank of the Somme, and possessing a castle garrisoned by Charles the Bold, Edward proposed to halt

till Saint Quentin, which was only a few leagues distant, should be delivered up to him by the Constable Saint Pol.

Throughout the march, the conduct of the Duke of Burgundy had been such as to inspire distrust. Evidently, he was most unwilling that the English army should enter any town belonging to him, or disturb the inhabitants. At Arras, where his wishes were disregarded, he could not conceal his vexation; and now at Peronne, though he could not refuse Edward admittance to the town, he would not lodge him at the Castle.

The drawbridge was kept constantly raised, and no one was permitted to enter the fortress. Determined not to brook further delay, and fancying he perceived some symptoms of uneasiness about his brother-in-law, Edward called upon him to compel the Constable to fulfil his promise to deliver up Saint Quentin.

Accordingly, Charles sent a letter to the Constable; but as the messenger did not return forthwith, the King waxed impatient, and set out for Saint Quentin, with a guard of two hundred archers, accompanied by the Duke of Burgundy, who had likewise a small guard with him.

On arriving within a couple of leagues of Saint Quentin, Edward commanded the captain of the guard to ride on with twenty men, and announce his approach to the Constable.

On reaching the town with his company, the officer found the gates shut, and a number of armed men on the walls. Two large pieces of ordnance were placed on the summit of the gate, and the engineers threatened to fire upon him if he did not at once withdraw with his men.

Highly offended, the officer demanded admittance in the name of the King of England, whereupon a body of cavalry, commanded, it was thought, by the Constable Saint Pol in person, sallied forth, killed the officer, and three of the men, and drove off the rest, who galloped back as hard as they could, to warn the King of his danger.

Edward was riding slowly along, at the head of his men, with Charles the Bold by his side, and the Lords Hastings and Howard close behind him, when the discomfited soldiers came up, and told him what had happened.

Highly incensed, he cried out to the Duke of Burgundy, "By my soul, brother! you shall rue this treachery!"

"Am I answerable for the Constable's misdoings?" observed Charles, coldly. "Visit your anger upon him."

"Think not to impose upon me by this equivocation!" cried Edward, furiously. "You are the real author of the mischief! Can I doubt that the Constable is acting by your orders? But, as I live, both you and he shall regret it!"

"Calm yourself, I pray you, my liege," intimated Hastings, fearing that the quarrel might proceed to some dire extremity. "Doubtless, his Grace will be able to offer an explanation."

"By Saint George of Burgundy! I know nothing of the matter," said Charles, as I will prove to you. Let us ride on, and demand an explanation from the Constable."

But Edward refused to proceed.

"You have deceived me," he said, sternly, "and I will not trust you further. You shall return with me to Peronne."

"As your prisoner? Never!" rejoined Charles, laying his hand upon the hilt of his sword. "Whoso dares hinder my departure had best look to himself! Come with me, Burgundians!"

Thus enjoined, his scanty band of followers pressed towards him.

Edward seemed disposed to stay him, but Hastings again interposed.

"He will never surrender himself, my liege," said the Earl; "and if he be slain, you will be held accountable for his death."

Edward was sufficiently master of himself to listen to this judicious advice.

As the Duke departed, he called out to him, "Take refuge in Saint Quentin, brother. The Constable will gladly let you in, though he refuses me admittance."

Disdaining to make any reply, Charles rode slowly away with his followers.

Firmly resolved to break off the alliance with his faithless brother-in-law, Edward returned to Peronne.

In the first impulse of his wrath, he determined to assault Saint Quentin, and wrest the town from the Constable; but when he grew calmer, he deemed it advisable to await the result of the message to Louis.

Beginning to feel some uneasiness respecting Isidore, he resolved to send another messenger to Compiègne, and could find none more suitable than a cordelier, named Father Severin, who had accompanied the army from Dover.

Edward's instructions to the cordelier, who could speak French fluently, were that he should proceed as quickly as he could to Compiègne, and ascertain if any mischance had befallen Isidore and Claude. Father Severin was charged to render them all the assistance in his power. Moreover, he was furnished with a letter, which he was to deliver to Louis, in case circumstances rendered the step necessary—not otherwise.

Provided with a stout, ambling nag, and with ample means for the journey, the cordelier set out alone, as it was not deemed prudent to send an escort with him.

Having taken this precautionary step, Edward employed himself in preparing for a vigorous prosecution of the war, should Louis decline to accept his conditions.

The bulk of the army were anxious that the campaign should commence in earnest, as they felt sure that the same success that had formerly attended the English arms awaited them now. Moreover, their patience was well-nigh exhausted and provisions were becoming scarce. They, therefore, ardently hoped that the King would soon order an attack upon Amiens.

The principal knights and nobles were, however, quite satisfied with what had already been done, and the citizens were of the same opinion.

Unaccustomed to hardships of any kind, the latter were annoyed by the trifling discomforts to which they had been subjected during the march from Calais to Peronne, and wished themselves safe back again in London.

VI.

HOW ISIDORE PROCEEDED TOWARDS COMPIEGNE, AND HOW HE WAS STOPPED BY A PARTY OF BURGUNDIAN SOLDIERS ON THE WAY TO MONTDIDIER.

AFTER the encounter with Charles the Bold, which had caused considerable alarm to Isidore and Claude, they proceeded across a plain, rendered famous at a subsequent period for the meeting between Henry VIII and Francis I; and, without halting at Ardres, rode along the banks of a little river to Saint Omer, where they halted for the night.

Resuming their journey at an early hour next morning, and passing through Bethune, they reached Arras without hindrance or misadventure.

There they would have sojourned for the night, but as it seemed likely they might be detained by the authorities of the town, they decided upon proceeding as far as Doulens.

Next day they rode to Peronne, but did not enter the town, and after refreshing themselves and their horses, shaped their course towards Montdidier; but they had not proceeded much more than a league, when they perceived they were followed by a small party of Burgundian soldiers, with an officer at their head.

The leader of the troop called out to them to stop, and, as it was impossible to fly, they obeyed.

Facing about with his attendants, and assuming a courageous look, Isidore waited till the officer came up, and then haughtily inquired his business.

"Pardon me, fair sir," said the officer, courteously. "The orders I have received from the Governor of Peronne are to take you and your attendants back to the town. Be pleased, therefore, to come with me."

"I protest against any interruption in the name of the King of England!" said Isidore. "I am an envoy from his Majesty to King Louis."

"I must remind you, fair sir, that you are still in the territories of his Highness the Duke of Burgundy," said the officer, who had not in the slightest degree abated his courtesy.

"I am quite aware of it," replied Isidore. "But the Duke your master, is the ally as well as the brother-in-law of King Edward."

"Nevertheless, his Highness does not choose that a message even from the King of England be sent without his Grace's knowledge and approval to the King of France."

"Now has the Duke learnt that I am

charged with any such message?" demanded Isidore.

"I am not bound to give any explanation," replied the officer; "but it would seem that his Highness encountered you and your party near Ardres, and suspecting your errand, has sent an order to have you stayed."

"No doubt you have calculated the consequences of such a step. It will naturally give great umbrage to the King, my master."

"I have simply to obey orders. You will be first taken to Peronne, and will then be sent back to the English camp. Compel me not, I pray you, to use force."

"Since needs must, I will go with you," said Isidore. "But I again warn you that the King, my master, will deeply resent this interference!"

"I cannot help it," rejoined the officer, shrugging his shoulders.

With great reluctance, Cyriac and his comrades accompanied the Burgundian soldiers; but, as their young leader did not seem inclined to offer any resistance, they obeyed, and the whole party turned back, and proceeded towards Peronne.

They had not, however, got far when a troop of horsemen, whose accoutrements and the standard which they carried showed they were French soldiers, issued from a wood, and made quickly towards them.

At the sight of this troop, which more than trebled his own in number, the Burgundian officer, though a brave man, looked quite dismayed. In the leader of the hostile troop, he had recognised the Sire de Comines, one of the chief counsellors of the French King; and he felt almost certain that this was only a reconnoitring party, and that a much larger force must be close at hand.

Bidding his men save themselves, he seized hold of Isidore's bridle, and tried to drag him along; but Cyriac came to the young esquire's assistance, and soon liberated him.

The Burgundian officer then struck spurs into his horse's flanks, and galloped off with his men towards Peronne.

Pursuit, however, was not attempted by the Sire de Comines, who presently came up with his troop.

VII.

WHAT PASSED BETWEEN ISIDORE AND THE SIRE DE COMINES.

THE chief councillor and chamberlain of the French King was a noble-looking personage, and his strongly marked but handsome countenance was stamped by intelligence, and had a grave and rather stern expression.

Originally in the service of Charles the Bold, with whom he was a great favourite, Philip de Comines was induced to abandon the Duke by the magnificent offers made him by the wily Louis XI, who desired to secure to himself a person of such ability.

On the defection of Comines, all his estates were immediately confiscated by the Duke of Burgundy; but he was amply rewarded for the loss.

Louis appointed him his chief councillor and chamberlain, with a pension of six thousand livres, and besides bestowing other lucrative honours upon him, created him Prince de Talmont.

Endowed with great shrewdness and power of observation, Philip de Comines kept a record of the most important events that occurred during the reign of Louis XI, and to him we are indebted for the best chronicle of the period under consideration.

But, though the pursuits of the Sire de Comines were studious, he was well-skilled in military matters, and as fond of the sword as the pen. An excellent horseman, he constantly accompanied his royal master in the chase. He was above the middle height, and strongly built.

On the present occasion, he was clad in a suit of mail, damasked with gold, and graven with his arms, and over his armour he wore a rich mantle.

As he came up, he looked hard and inquiringly at Isidore, and said, "By your looks and habiliments you should be an English esquire. What do you here?"

"I am the bearer of a message from the King of England to King Louis of France," replied Isidore.

"By Saint Philip!" exclaimed De Comines, "your royal master does not show much respect to his Majesty in sending to him such a cockcomb as thou art. Deliver thy message to me; I will convey it to the King."

"May I inquire who makes me the offer?" said Isidore.

"I am the Sire de Comines, Prince de Talmont, the King's chief councillor and chamberlain," said the other.

"And his Majesty's best adviser," replied Isidore, taking off his cap, and bowing lowly. "I have often heard my royal master speak of you in terms of the highest commendation."

"Ah! indeed," exclaimed De Comines, looking hard at the speaker. "It appears you have much influence with King Edwards."

"Not much," replied the esquire. "But he can trust me."

"And you have really an important message for King Louis? Do not trifle with me."

"My message is most important, as you will admit when I tell you that on the result of my interview depends war or peace!"

"Do you come as an ambassador from the King of England?" cried De Comines.

"No," replied Isidore; "but I am authorized by the King to negotiate a truce."

Though scarcely crediting the assertion, De Comines made no remark; but, after reflecting for a few moments, said, "I will take you to the King. I had other matter in hand, but this shall supersede it."

During the foregoing brief colloquy, the attentances of both speakers had been carefully watched by Claude and Cyriac, who soon an understanding had been arrived at.

They were not surprised, therefore, when the Sire de Comines ordered his men to return

at once to Compiègne, while Isidore explained to his followers that he was about to accompany the French noble.

The whole party then set off at a brisk pace for Roze, where they halted, and then proceeded to Gournay.

After resting themselves and their horses at the latter place, they rode on to Compiègne.

During the whole of the journey, De Comines paid great attention to the young esquire, and seemed very anxious to obtain information respecting Charles the Bold.

All Isidore could tell him was that the Duke had joined the King at Calais, but with only a very slender attendance.

VIII.

HOW ISIDORE MET THE COUNT DE BEAUJEU IN THE FOREST OF COMPIÈGNE; AND HOW THE YOUNG ESQUIRE AND HIS COMPANION WERE LODGED IN THE ROYAL PALACE.

EVENING was coming on as the Sire de Comines and Isidore, with the others, entered the extensive forest adjoining Compiègne, and they were pursuing the road that led through it, when from a side alley, about a bow-shot in advance, there issued a small hunting party, consisting of some half-dozen huntsmen, at the head of whom rode a man of middle age, habited in a green velvet hunting-dress. This person had a couteau de chasses in his belt, and a riding whip in his hand. Despite his plain attire, there was an air of distinction about him, and his manner, albeit peculiar and abrupt, was not devoid of dignity. He rode a very fine horse, and though his own attire was extremely plain, the liveries of the huntsmen were magnificent.

"Tis the Count de Beaujeu. I did not expect to meet him here," exclaimed De Comines.

With this, he signed to his men to slacken their pace, and rode on alone to join the Count, who waited till he came up, the huntsmen slowly continuing their course, accompanied by the hounds.

The name and title of the stranger conveyed nothing to Isidore. He had never before heard of the Count de Beaujeu; but, he was struck by his appearance. In age the Count might be about fifty, perhaps rather more; but he looked full of vigour. His features were strongly marked, and characterized by great shrewdness, and had a very crafty and sarcastic expression.

While conversing with De Comines, the Count ever and anon cast a scrutinizing glance at Isidore, proving that the young esquire was the subject of their discourse.

At length Isidore was summoned, and presented to the Count, who thus addressed him, eyeing keenly as he spoke.

"Soh! you are an envoy from the King of England. I am told, young sir, you have some qualifications for the office. Indeed, you are good-looking, and the Sire de Comines says you speak our language well; but I cannot

understand why your royal master should send you on the errand, unless a jest is intended."

"I fear the laugh would be against me: if I attempted to jest with King Louis," rejoined Isidore.

"You are right," remarked De Comines.

"Yet King Louis jested with his royal brother when he sent him that singular present of the wolf, the wild boar, and the ass," observed the esquire.

"What said King Edward to the gift?" demanded the Count, laughing.

"I dare not tell you, my lord; but his Majesty was highly offended."

"Perchance, it is in reprisal that he now sends you as his envoy?"

"I am sent because his Majesty felt certain I should succeed in the mission," Isidore observed.

"He must place great reliance on your powers of persuasion," remarked the Count, drily.

"Persuasion will be unnecessary, my lord," rejoined the esquire. "King Louis will gladly accede to the proposition I am empowered to make to him."

"You think so?" cried the Count.

"I am sure of it," rejoined the esquire, "because it is his interest to do so."

Both the Count de Beaujeu and De Comines laughed heartily at this observation.

"You treat the matter lightly, my lords," said the esquire; "but your royal master will view it very differently."

"We shall see!" rejoined the Count. "Have you a written authority from the King?"

"I have his signet-ring," replied Isidore, taking off his glove, and displaying it.

"Enough!" exclaimed the Count, after he had carefully examined the ring. "I am satisfied. You shall have an audience of the King to-morrow."

"I thank you, my lord," said the esquire; "but, perchance, you promise more than you can perform."

"I promise nothing, save that you shall see the King," rejoined the Count. "I have influence enough with him to procure you an audience; that is all. Take the youth to the palace," he added, to De Comines.

So saying, he rejoined the huntsmen, and, again putting himself at their head, rode off at a brisk pace, and quickly disappeared.

"I have heard that the King has some strange favourites," observed Isidore. "The Count de Beaujeu must be one of the strangest of them."

"He has more influence than any one else with the King," rejoined De Comines. "His Majesty can do nothing without him."

Isidore would fain have questioned him further as to this singular personage; but finding him disinclined for converse, he forbore.

Nothing more passed between them till they emerged from the forest, and came in sight of the old town of Compiègne. Pleasantly situated on the banks of the Oise, it

formed a very charming picture from this point of view.

Close to the town, but not within the walls, was the palace—a large fortified edifice, surrounded by a deep moat, supplied with water by the Oise. The aspect of the buildings, with its towers and ramparts, was exceedingly striking.

Dismissing the greatest part of his men, with orders to proceed to the town, and retaining only a small guard, De Comines conducted the young esquire and his attendants to the palace.

The drawbridge was raised, but was instantly lowered on the appearance of the party; and, crossing it, and passing through a gateway, which was strongly guarded, they reached the court-yard.

Here several grooms and pages, in the royal livery, were collected; and by the time Isidore had dismounted, a gentleman usher made his appearance.

Addressing the usher, De Comines told him that lodgings were to be provided for the young esquire and his attendant, pointing as he spoke to Claude, who was now standing beside his master; upon which the usher bowed profoundly, said that orders to that effect had been given him, and all was ready for the young esquire's reception in the best part of the palace.

The significance with which the latter part of the speech was uttered did not escape Isidore, and he remarked with a smile to De Comines, "The Count de Beaujeu, I perceive, has been beforehand with us."

In sooth, you are indebted to him for this attention," replied De Comines.

"I am none the less indebted to you, my lord," said Isidore. "Without your aid I should not be here now."

"Perhaps not; but all difficulties and dangers are surmounted, and you are safe in the royal palace. To-morrow you will see the King. No doubt I shall be present at the audience."

"And the Count de Beaujeu also?"

"Most likely. Till then, adieu! The usher will conduct you to your apartments."

Praying the young esquire to follow him, the usher then led him and Claude, who kept constantly near his master, to a wing of the palace facing the Oise, and commanding a charming view.

It would seem that the rooms assigned the young esquire and his attendant must have belonged to one of the Count's ladies, for an elderly gouvernante, who was addressed as Madame Benoitte, and her daughter Colombe, appeared to have sitting charge of them, and waited upon the guests. No pages or valets were allowed to enter the rooms.

Strange as it seemed, this arrangement proved extremely agreeable to Isidore and his companion, nor could they complain, for the utmost attention was shown them by Madame Benoitte and Colombe. Supper was served early, and, after partaking of it, Isidore re-

tired to rest, being somewhat fatigued by the journey.

Next morning, there was a great stir within the palace, and Isidore inquired whether anything unusual had happened, and was informed by the gouvernante that the King was inspecting the garrison.

Feeling certain he should receive a summons when it was proper to present himself to his Majesty, the young esquire did not leave his room, but passed the time in contemplating the beautiful view of the town and the river from the windows.

He was thus occupied when De Comines entered the room, and, after courteously saluting him, proposed to conduct him to the King.

"His Majesty has graciously consented to grant you an audience," he said. "Have no misgiving; he is in a perfectly good humour, and I think all will turn out as well as you could desire."

"I am glad to hear it," replied Isidore. "But where is the Count de Beaujeu? I hoped to see him."

"You will see him anon," replied De Comines. "Let me show you the way to the King's cabinet."

They then went forth together, leaving Claude behind, though the page would fain have accompanied his master.

After traversing a corridor thronged by various officers connected with the royal establishment, who made way respectfully for them, and threading several narrow passages, they came to a second corridor, quite as crowded as the first.

Here they entered an ante-chamber, in which some half-dozen distinguished-looking personages were collected. These persons bowed to De Comines, and looked hard at Isidore, but made no remark.

Stationed at the further end of the room was an usher, bearing a white wand. On seeing them approach, he opened the door of the royal cabinet.

Greatly was Isidore surprised to find that there was no one in the little chamber except the person whom he had hitherto known as the Count de Beaujeu. The supposed Count, however, no longer wore the hunting dress in which he had been first seen, but a costume that proclaimed his exalted rank. It was needless for De Comines to inform the esquire that this was King Louis.

Stepping forward, Isidore bent the knee to the monarch, who smiled graciously as he raised him.

IX.

NOW ISIDORE HAD AN AUDIENCE OF KING LOUIS XI IN HIS MAJESTY'S PRIVATE CABINET OF THE PALACE.

Now in 1423, Louis XI was now upwards of fifty, but still strong and remarkably active. He was of middle height, and stooped slightly, but his person was well formed. His features

were sharp and intelligent, and his face being scrupulously shaven, its expression could easily be read. His eyes were gray, and their glances singularly keen and searching.

On his closely-cropped head he wore an embroidered velvet skull-cap, above which was a bonnet bordered with pearls, and having a little leaden figure of the Blessed Virgin placed in front. About his person were a number of saintly relics and images.

On the present occasion, his attire consisted of a tawney-satin tunic, embroidered with gold, over which he wore a purple velvet robe, furled with ermine. Dark red silk hose, and velvet buskins of the same hue, completed his costume. Around his neck hung the chain of the order of Saint Michael, which he himself had founded in 1469.

The cruel, treacherous, and vindictive character of this able and most sagacious monarch is well known. Dissimulation was his practice; his favourite motto being, *Qui nescit dissimulare, nescit regnare*. It is said of him by Mézerai, "that he never neglected to revenge himself, unless he feared the consequences would be dangerous." And he always acted up to this principle, for he sought to make himself feared.

"Louis XI," says M. Pitre-Chevalier, "is one of those political giants that arise at the moment of social revolutions; some carry the sword, others the pen—he carried the axe, and the executioner was his gossip. This inflexible organizer, who bequeathed to France in the midst of the remains of the old world the elements of a new world, a homogeneous kingdom, a public administration, manufactures, roads, ports, and that equality before the king, which one day became equality before the law—this man, who alone in his time comprehended and carried his thoughts in his head—this politician so fine, that he attempted to deceive Heaven, and braved Satan, of whom he was so much afraid—this Louis XI, in short, for his name alone ought to define him, said to himself, while thinking of his great vassals, whom he meant to destroy, 'My two cousins, Burgundy and Bretagne, shall fall the first.'"

Numerous assassinations were said to be the charge of this terrible King. It is said that he poisoned Agnes Sorel, the beautiful and amiable favourite of his father, Charles VII; and so fearful was the father of being poisoned by his son, that he refused all nourishment, and died from excess of precaution.

Those who became the confidants and favourites of Louis were men of the lowest condition. The three persons, who had the greatest ascendancy over him were his provost-marshal, Tristan l'Hermite, whom he familiarly styled his gossip; his keeper, Olivier le Dain; and his physician, Jacques Coctier. His best and sincerest adviser was Philip de Comines, whom he had contrived to detach from the service of Charles the Bold.

Louis never forgave a minister who abused his confidence; and having discovered the treacheries of Cardinal Baluz, he subjected him

THE BOAR HUNT. (See page 55.)



to a long and terrible imprisonment in an iron cage.

Ever since he ascended the throne, Louis had been engaged in a constant struggle with his great vassals, his rebellious subjects, and his powerful and ambitious neighbours.

Dangerous leagues were continually formed against him by his brother, the Duke de Guienne; and when the Duke died, it was said that Louis had removed him by poison. Other dark crimes were laid to his charge, and not unjustly.

The last and most dangerous league formed against Louis was that with which we have now to deal, and which comprehended the Duke of Burgundy, the Duke of Bretagne, and King Edward of England. But he hoped to break up this formidable alliance by his superior craft, and his first object was to get rid, at any cost, of the warlike monarch who had invaded his kingdom.

Fortunately for his purpose, the Duke of Burgundy had acted towards his royal ally with inconceivable folly, and Louis was not slow to take advantage of the Duke's egregious blunder. If he could separate Edward and Charles, the Duke of Bretagne would be easily dealt with.

Regarding the young esquire with a smiling and encouraging look, the wily monarch said to him, "I promised you should see the King, and you perceive I have kept my word."

Isidore bowed, and Louis went on, in a cajoling tone, "I am very glad my good cousin, the King of England, has sent you to me. He could not have chosen a better messenger."

"I was not chosen, sire," rejoined Isidore. "I volunteered to come."

"*Pâques-Dieu!* you have plenty of courage!" exclaimed Louis. "Yet I am surprised the King could trust you."

"He knew I was in no danger, sire; and he knew, also, that he could rely upon me."

"Are you in full possession of his Majesty's wishes, and able to treat for him?" asked Louis.

"I am, sire."

"In that case, I am persuaded we shall arrive at a satisfactory understanding. Believe me, when I assert that I have always desired to live on terms of amity with my good cousin, and, however appearances may be against me, my sincere wish has ever been that the two kingdoms should be at peace. Never since my accession to the throne have I undertaken a war against England; and if I received the Earl of Warwick, it was against the Duke of Burgundy, and not against King Edward."

"I will take care to mention this to my royal master," remarked Isidore.

"I know very well," pursued Louis, "that my good cousin has been induced to invade my kingdom by the artful representations of Charles of Burgundy. But the Duke is unable to aid him. He has just returned from the siege of Neuss, wholly discomfited. His army is in such a deplorable condition that he dares not show it to the King, your master."

"It would certainly appear so, sire," observed Isidore.

"I am also aware," said Louis, "that King Edward has an understanding with the Constable Saint Pol, whose niece he has married. But let him beware. The Constable is a traitor, as I know to my cost."

"His Majesty has little faith in him," observed Isidore.

"Mark me!" said Louis, significantly. "My good cousin will do far better to conclude a loyal peace with an old enemy, than to count upon the promises of his faithless allies."

"Such a peace may be concluded," said Isidore.

"You think so?" cried Louis, eagerly.

"I am able to state to your Majesty the terms on which alone King Edward will consent to make peace."

"Let me hear them," cried Louis.

"Before King Edward will leave the kingdom, he requires seventy-five thousand crowns down."

"He shall have them," said Louis.

"Further, an annuity for life of fifty thousand crowns."

"Granted!" cried Louis. "Is there aught more?"

"Yes, sire; the most material part has to come," said Isidore. "The next condition is that a marriage shall be contracted between the Dauphin and King Edward's eldest daughter, the Lady Elizabeth of York—it being understood that the Princess shall receive an annual pension of sixty thousand crowns, secured on the revenues of Gasconne, and to be paid at the Tower of London until such time as she shall come to France, to reside with her royal husband."

"This demand requires consideration," said Louis. "But I may possibly accede to it. How say you, De Comines?"

His councillor replied, in a few words, calculated only for the King's ear.

"Dear in mind, sire, the advice of Sforza, Duke of Milan—'Give what you have not got, and promise what you cannot give.'"

Seeing the shift of the minister, Louis added, to the esquire, "I agree to the proposed marriage. Is there aught more?"

"There are some other demands," replied Isidore; "but they are of minor importance, and relate chiefly to the citizens of London. I doubt not they will be readily conceded by your Majesty."

"By such matters do not need discussion," said Louis. "I agree to the terms proposed to me; my motives must not be misunderstood. I desire peace, but am fully prepared for war, and the passages of the Somme are well guarded, and King Edward will not be able to pass the river without severe fighting—even if he should succeed in passing it. Is he prepared for a long campaign? I doubt it. The Duke of Burgundy has led him to suppose he can march on without difficulty. He will find it otherwise. The country has been wasted, and as he will not be able to procure

"provisions for his army, he may have to retreat ingloriously."

"King Edward will not retreat, if the war once commences," said Isidore. "Of that your Majesty may rest assured. All difficulties will be surmounted, and he will return in triumph like Edward the Third from Cressy and Poitiers, and Henry the Fifth from Agincourt."

"We are talking of peace, not war," cried Louis, sharply.

"True, sire," rejoined Isidore; "and peace can be made, provided my royal master's terms are agreed to by your Majesty. A formal treaty has been drawn up, which only lacks your Majesty's signature."

"Have you the treaty?" demanded Louis, hastily.

"Tis here, sire," rejoined Isidore, taking the paper from his breast.

Louis almost snatched the document from him, and ran his eye eagerly over its contents.

"Your Majesty will find nothing more set down than what I have stated," said Isidore.

"You have not misled me, I see," cried Louis. "When this treaty is executed—and I know you have sufficient interest with King Edward to bring that about—you shall have, in token of my regard, nine thousand crowns in gold, besides the thousand I will presently bestow upon you."

"Ten thousand crowns of gold!" exclaimed the esquire. "Tis a royal gift!"

"But you will richly deserve it, if you are the means of securing a peace between the two kingdoms," observed De Comines.

"The conditions are fully agreed upon," said Louis; "but to keep up appearances, they must be formally discussed by ambassadors, on King Edward's part, and commissioners on mine; after which, an interview can take place between my good cousin and myself, when the treaty can be executed, and a truce concluded."

Isidore bowed assent, and Louis went on.

"You must be content to be my guest for a few days," he said, "while certain preliminaries are arranged; but you shall have as much privacy as you can desire."

"I am in no haste to depart," replied the esquire; "but I trust I may be permitted to communicate with the King, my master, who may feel some uneasiness concerning me."

"Tis my wish that you should write to King Edward," said Louis. "One of the guard who attended you can take the letter to him. Very few words will suffice, as the message might fall into wrong hands. Have you a man with you whom you can trust?"

"There is an archer named Cyriac, my liege, on whom I can perfectly rely."

"I have had some converse with the man," remarked De Comines, "and will answer for his fidelity."

"Enough," said Louis. "He shall have a safe conduct, which will protect him, unless he should fall into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy. Do not for a moment

hesitate," he continued, with a slight laugh, "that I mean to detain you as a hostage. But I may have a correspondence with King Edward, which you alone can conduct."

"I quite understand, sire," said Isidore.

"During your stay at Compiegne, which I will endeavour to make pleasant to you," said Louis, "you will do exactly as you please. Servants and horses shall be placed at your disposal. You can visit the town, ride in the forest, go where you will; all I require is that you do not leave without my consent."

Seeing that the interview was at an end, Isidore bowed profoundly to the King, and was re-conducted to his apartments by De Comines.

X.

HOW TWO SPLENDID LADIES' DRESSES WERE SENT BY KING LOUIS AS A PRESENT TO NIDORE AND CLAUDE.

ISIDORE'S first business was to write the letter agreed upon to King Edward; and, having sealed it, he sent for Cyriac, to whom he entrusted it, enjoining him to deliver it into the King's own hands.

Cyriac, who had already received a safe conduct, promised to execute his mission faithfully.

"No mischance, I trust, will happen to thee," said Isidore; "but shouldst thou fall into the Duke of Burgundy's hands, destroy the letter, and answer no questions touching thine errand."

"Fear not; I will say nothing, even if I be put to the torture," rejoined Cyriac.

"Shouldst thou reach the King in safety," pursued Isidore, "tell his Majesty that all has gone well, and that I have come to a satisfactory understanding with King Louis. Add that my return is uncertain, but his Majesty need have no anxiety about me."

Cyriac then departed, and shortly afterwards set out. He met with no interruption; at first, on his journey, but before reaching Ferme, he encountered the Sire de Sainville, with a party of soldiers, in the service of the Constable Saint Pol.

De Sainville showed no respect for his safe conduct, but, thinking something might be made of him, took him to Saint Quentin.

Brought before the Constable, Cyriac was sharply questioned, but refused to disclose his errand, though threatened with the ladder.

Unluckily, however, the letter, which he had no opportunity of destroying, was found upon him; and this, though containing only a few words, satisfied the Constable that a negotiation was going on between Edward and the King of France.

On making this important discovery, he clapped the unhappy messenger in prison, and set himself to consider how the affair could be best turned to his own advantage. After much deliberation, he resolved to warn the Duke of Burgundy; but as the Duke was now with Edward, he could not, for the present, communicate with him.

Leaving this double-dealing personage to

arrange his schemes, we will return to Compiègne, and see what had happened to Isidore. If the young esquire had been a noble of the highest rank, greater attention could not have been paid him than he received from the wily monarch.

Everything that could be devised in so dull a court as that of Louis, was done for his amusement. Various sports and diversions were provided for him, and he was taken by the King to hunt in the park and the forest; and Louis and the courtiers appeared delighted with his skill. On all occasions he was attended by Claude. Several entertainments were given by the King, at which he appeared as a distinguished guest.

One morning, Claude came into his chamber before he had risen, and laughing heartily, said,—

"What think you the King has sent?"

"Nay, I cannot guess," replied Isidore.

"Two splendid ladies' dresses," replied Claude; "one of cloth of velvet, evidently intended for you, and the other of figured satin, which, I suppose, must be meant for me."

"Let me look at them!" cried Isidore, springing from the couch, and putting on a loose robe.

Exclamations of wonder and delight followed, when the dresses were brought in by Claude, and after they had been sufficiently admired, Isidore was easily prevailed upon to try the effect of the velvet costume.

Not satisfied with a mere trial of the gown, Claude insisted that the whole dress should be put on; and when the toilette was completed, Isidore stepped into the adjoining saloon, where there was a large mirror, to see the effect of the transformation.

The change, indeed, was magical. The handsome esquire had become a most beautiful woman.

Isidore was still standing in front of the glass, attended by Claude, who was arranging the dress with all the nicety and skill of a female hand; when sounds of laughter warned them that other persons were present; and turning, they perceived the King.

Louis had entered without being announced, accompanied by the Sire de Comines.

For a moment, he seemed lost in admiration of the lovely woman he beheld; while, on her part, Jane—for she it was—exhibited some little confusion at being thus discovered.

Claude, however, did not seem at all embarrassed, and, perhaps, might have been an agent in the plot.

"Pardon me, fair lady," said Louis, advancing. "I had all along suspected that the handsome young esquire sent to me by the King of England was no other than the lovely Mistress Shore, and I had, therefore, recourse to this stratagem to elicit the truth."

Having now recovered her composure, Jane made a graceful reverence to the King, and said, "Since the secret has been discovered, it would be idle to attempt to preserve my incognito; but I beseech your Majesty to

believe that no disrespect has been intended to you by King Edward. He consented very reluctantly to send me."

"*Pardieu-Dieu!* I am right glad he did send you!" cried Louis. "No other envoy could have pleased me better, or served him so well. By Saint Denis!" he continued, gazing at her with increased admiration. "I marvel not that my good cousin has been enslaved by so much beauty. Such charms are more than mortal could resist—especially a mortal so inflammable as King Edward."

"I have always understood that King Louis never condescended to flatter," remarked Jane.

"Truth sometimes sounds like flattery," rejoined Louis. "And in good sooth it would be impossible to flatter Mistress Shore. But come and sit by me, madame. I have something to say to you."

And he led her to a sofa, while the others retired to a short distance.

"Pray consider me an old friend, madame," he said, in a wheedling tone, "and speak to me as freely as you would to King Edward. I should like you to carry away an agreeable impression of your visit to Compiègne."

"I cannot fail to do that, sire, having experienced so much kindness from your Majesty."

"Poh! I have done nothing," said Louis; "nothing, at least, in comparison with what I will do. Say the word, and I will make you a countess."

"I have really no desire for rank, sire, or my wish would have been already gratified."

"It shall be no barren title," said Louis. "You shall have a large revenue."

"I have more money than I need, sire," she rejoined.

"*Comment! diantre!*" exclaimed Louis, in surprise. "You are the first of your sex I have met with who has refused honours and wealth."

"Friendship is not to be bought, sire," she remarked.

"How, then, can yours be won?" he cried, regarding her fixedly. "Are you willing to exchange the Court of England for that of France?"

"No, sire," she replied, firmly. "I will never quit King Edward."

A strange smile played upon Louis's cynical features, as he observed,—

"Your King is reputed to be inconstant."

"All men are inconstant, sire," she rejoined.

"I do not expect a paragon. But King Edward is the best of men."

"No one can esteem all his noble qualities more highly than myself," said Louis. "But he has many advisers who are inclined to me, and I should like, therefore, to have a friend near him."

"I will gladly serve your Majesty, if I can do so without prejudice to King Edward's interests."

"That is all I can ask," said Louis. "Come

point was touched upon in our previous discussion," he added, in a far more serious tone than he had hitherto assumed; "but I am sure I shall have all the aid you can render in the matter. There is an illustrious prisoner in the Tower of London, whose liberation I would fain accomplish. 'Twould be treason to aid her escape; but I am sure you feel pity for her."

"You allude to Margaret of Anjou, sire. My sympathies are with the house of York; but I do pity the unfortunate Queen from the bottom of my heart. Could I open her prison door, she should be free at once. These may be treasonable sentiments, but I have uttered them to King Edward, and he has not reproved me. You misjudge him, sire, if you suppose he is insensible to the sorrows of that bereaved wife and mother."

"Nevertheless, he will not set her free without a heavy ransom," said Louis. "That ransom I am prepared to pay. The unhappy Queen's father, the good King René, is willing to make a sacrifice of part of Provence, to procure his daughter's liberation from captivity. I will advance the money, and if King Edward's demands are not too exorbitant, Queen Margaret will be set free."

"What sum are you willing to pay for the Queen's liberation, sire?" asked Jane.

"Fifty thousand crowns," replied Louis. "The offer is from King René, not from me."

"If I have any influence with King Edward, no greater demand shall be made," said Jane.

"I place the matter in your hands," said Louis. "It may be that the poor widowed Queen may owe her liberty to you."

"Ah! if I could only hope so!" exclaimed Jane.

"'Tis somewhat strange that no answer has been received from King Edward," observed Louis. "Our messenger, I trust, has not fallen into the hands of the Duke of Burgundy, or been detained by the Constable Saint-Pol. My provost-marshal, Tristan, shall take a small troop of horse to Noyon to make inquiries about him. To-morrow, or next day, I shall go to Amiens, and I must pray you, fair lady, to bear me company, unless we hear from King Edward in the interim. Of course, you can resume your disguise, if you think proper."

"I thank your Majesty," she replied. "It is not my intention to abandon it until I have done with camps, and return to England. Had I not adopted that costume, I could not have accompanied King Edward."

"And if you had been left behind, I should have been the greatest loser, since I should not have had the pleasure of receiving the favour of her sex at Compiègne."

As he spoke, he raised her hand to his lips, with an air of gallantry, and quitted the saloon.

As soon as they were gone, then Jane's attendant, who, it is scarcely necessary to ex-

plain, was no other than Alix, habited as a page, began to laugh very heartily.

"I would not desire a more diverting sight than I have just witnessed," she said. "I am certain you have captivated King René. A truce will be impossible if things go on thus. King Edward will have to continue the war to get you back again."

Jane tried to look grave, but failed. "Come and help me to change my dress," she said. "I have become so accustomed to the ease and freedom of male attire, that I cannot bear a gown."

XI.

HOW LOUIS XL HUNTED THE WILD BOAR IN THE FOREST OF COMPIÈGNE.

HALF AN HOUR afterwards, Jane reappeared as the young esquire Isidore, and, followed by the supposed page, Claude, descended to the court-yard of the palace.

They were just in time to see the redoubted provost-marshal start on his expedition. A terrible personage was Tristan l'Hermite. Not a trace of feeling could be discerned in his inflexible countenance. No smile ever parted his thin, tightly-compressed lips.

Armed in a coat of mail, over which he wore a surcoat with large loose sleeves, Tristan had a huge two-handed sword attached to his girdle. Ordinarily, he was attended by a couple of ill-favoured varlets, provided with halbers; nor were they absent on the present occasion, as their aid might be needed.

The provost-marshal had brought his horse close up to the King, who was stationed on a flight of steps. Having received his instructions, Tristan bent respectfully and departed, accompanied by a small detachment of archers, among whom were the two executioners before-mentioned.

As soon as he was gone, Louis called for horses and hounds, and noticing the young esquire amid the assemblage of courtiers, invited him to join the chase, telling him the day's sport would commence with a boar hunt. Isidore could not have refused; but, in sooth, he was very curious to see the royal pastime promised him.

Shortly afterwards, a large party of nobles and gentlemen, all well mounted and armed for the boar hunt, set forth from the palace, headed by the King.

In preparation for the boar hunt, Louis was accoutred in doublet and hose of coars gray cloth, fitting close to the limbs.

A short two-edged sword hung from his girdle, and, like all his attendants, he was furnished with a sharp boar-spear. A boar-spear was likewise given to Isidore, but the King laughingly told him he would not have to use it.

In close attendance upon the King were three hunters, each of whom had in slip a couple of large and powerful hounds, having leather caps fastened round the body, to protect them from the boar's tusks—a very inadequate defence, as it turned out.

Thus attended, and taking care Isidore should not be far from him, Louis rode into the depths of the forest.

The spot where the boar was lodged was marked by strong nets, hung from trees to tree. These toils served to imprison the savage beast in his lair; and while they were being removed, Louis counselled the young esquire to take up a position near some distant bushes, which he pointed out, so that he could witness the sport without much risk.

Soon afterwards, the boar was unconched, and proved to be an animal of the largest size, and armed with tremendous tusks. Stalking forth very deliberately into the open space where the King and the nobles were grouped, he eyed the assemblage menacingly, and seemed singling out some one to attack.

A couple of hounds were now let slip, and, cheered by the huntsmen, they assailed the boar fiercely, striving to seize him by the head. But both were speedily shaken off. Despite his leathern coat, one was ripped up by the boar's merciless tusks, and the other disabled.

Having thus liberated himself from his assailants, the chafed animal turned upon the huntsmen nearest him, feined at them with his tusks, broke their spears, and put them to flight.

Delighted with the proofs thus afforded of the formidable brute's prodigious strength, Louis ordered the four remaining hounds to be unleashed, and cheered them on himself to the attack.

The conflict seemed unequal, but the boar comported himself well, and gained the applause of all the hunt, especially of the King, who was enraptured by his prowess.

At first, the advantage seemed with the hounds, but, ere long, two were laid sprawling on the ground, and the others were so much hurt that they could not hold the boar, who dashed off towards the bushes near which Isidore and his companion were posted.

Claude instantly galloped off, for it was clear that the infuriated beast meant to attack them; but Isidore displayed no alarm. Dexterously avoiding the boar's onslaught, he struck the fierce brute with his spear, but could not pierce his tough and bristly hide; and this manoeuvre was successfully repeated, until the King had time to come up with his attendants.

Seeing the young esquire's peril, Louis drew his sword, and, by a downward stroke, hamstringed the boar, causing the animal to sink on his haunches. Next moment, Isidore's spear, plunged under the shoulder, pierced the boar's heart.

"By Saint Hubert! a great feat!" cried Louis. "You have slain the fiercest and largest boar in the forest."

"But for your Majesty's aid, the boar would have slain me," rejoined Isidore.

"and then I should have borne the blame of the mischance," said the King, "though I cautioned you to keep out of the way of danger. However, you have displayed great courage.

The boar's head shall be yours, and you can send it to King Edward if you choose."

"His Majesty would be astonished if he received such a present from me, sire," replied Isidore.

"*Pardieu-dieu!* we must not alarm him!" cried Louis; "nor shall you run any further risk. We will pursue a safer sport, in which you excel."

After this, no fewer than seven noble stags were slain, his Majesty being always foremost in the chase. Nor was Isidore far behind. The young esquire rode so well, that he attracted general attention, and received warm commendation from Louis himself. The last stag roused led them to the furthest extremity of the forest, where he was slaughtered by the King's own hand; and the party were riding slowly back, when they suddenly came upon an extraordinary scene.

XII.

HOW ISIDORE SAVED A CORDELLIER FROM THE CORD.

In the centre of an open space, at the north side of the forest, grew an immense oak, with wide-spreading arms.

Underneath this mighty tree were stationed Tristan l'Hermite and his archers; and at the very moment when the royal hunting-party approached the solitary spot, the provost-marshal was superintending the execution of certain prisoners he had taken.

Already three unhappy wretches, just strung up, were dangling overhead from the branches of the oak.

A fourth prisoner was kneeling upon the ground, with his hands clasped in prayer, awaiting a like fate. He was a cordelier, and his hood was thrown back, so as to display his features, which now wore the livid hue of death.

Near him stood the two caitiffs, watching for a sign from their leader to tie him to the fatal tree.

On beholding this scene, Louis pressed forward, not with any intention of staying the execution, but because he felt curious to know what offence the wretched culprits had committed.

Tristan, however, thought it best to get the job done, and talk afterwards. Accordingly, he gave the word to his assistants, and in another moment all would have been over with the unfortunate cordelier, if Isidore had not come to his rescue.

The young esquire, who was close behind the King, had recognised the features of the kneeling monk. The face was too well known ever to be forgotten. The recognition was mutual. But it was not a vindictive look that the cordelier fixed upon the esquire, nor was it supplicatory. It was rather a look of scorn.

But, be it what it might, it checked Isidore to the quick; and he addressed to the King, "Sire, you have promised me a boon. I now ask one from your Majesty. Spare me the life of that man."

Tristan heard the request, and glanced significantly at his royal master, to intimate that the prisoner ought not to be spared.

"What has he done?" demanded Louis.

"Sire, he is a spy employed by the Duke of Burgundy," replied Tristan.

"Impossible!" cried Isidore. "I know him. He is an Englishman."

"He was taken with those men, who are Burgundians," said Tristan, doggedly, determined not to relinquish his prey.

"I believe him to be a messenger from the King of England," said Isidore, earnestly.

"It is true," said the cordelier. "I so represented myself, but my assertion was not credited."

"I had no proof of what the man stated, sire," remarked Tristan, gruffly.

"Because my safe-conduct and letter of credence had been taken from me by the Burgundians," cried the cordelier.

"If this monk be executed, King Edward will most assuredly require a strict account of his death," said Isidore. "An untoward occurrence at this juncture might be fraught with serious consequences."

"Since you take a personal interest in the prisoner, it is sufficient," said Louis. "Release him," he added, to Tristan.

Thereupon, the cordelier was instantly set free, and prostrating himself before the King, thanked him for his gracious interposition in his behalf.

"Rise, father," cried Louis. "You have had a narrow escape. You should address your thanks to this young esquire, not to me. 'Tis to him you owe your life."

The cordelier bent his head, but spoke no word.

"Draw nearer," said Louis. "If thou hast any message to me from the King of England, deliver it."

"I have no message, sire," replied the monk. "His Majesty had become anxious for the safety of his envoy, and sent me to ascertain that all was well with him. I met with misadventures on the way; as you are aware, being captured by those Burgundian soldiers, and re-captured by your provost-marshal, who refused to listen to my explanation. All would have been over with me had not your Majesty appeared so opportunely, and saved me; and I again thank you for my life, though it is scarcely worth preserving. My errand is fulfilled. I can now report to my royal master that I have seen his envoy, and that he is well."

"Thou shalt have something more to report," said Louis. "But do I understand thee aright? Hath not Cyriac, the archer, arrived?" He was despatched thence some days ago, with a missive to King Edward."

"No messenger had arrived, sire, when I departed; and King Edward, as I have said, had become uneasy. Cyriac, I doubt not, has been captured, for I learnt from the Burgundian soldiers that an English archer was in the hands of the Constable Saint Pol."

"Ha!" exclaimed Louis, angrily. "By Saint Denis! the Constable shall regret his interference. But you must get back quickly, and allay your royal master's fears respecting his envoy. Where is King Edward now?"

"Encamped near Peronne," replied the monk.

"Faster than! So near?" exclaimed Louis. "Then 'tis time we were at Amiens. Since my provost-marshal hath brought thee here, he shall escort thee back. Thou hearest, Tristan," he added, to that important officer.

Find a horse instantly for this good friar, and conduct him as nigh as thou canst to Peronne."

I will bring him within a league of the town," said the provost-marshal. "He must do the rest himself."

Give him whatever gold thou hast about thee," pursued Louis.

Tristan slightly murmured at this injunction, and the cordelier hastened to say that he desired no reward.

"Stay a moment," cried Louis, as if an idea had suddenly crossed him.

Then, turning to Isidore, he said, "I am very unwilling to part with you, but if you desire to return with this friar I will not hinder you."

"I thank your Majesty," replied the young esquire; "but as I may have more to do, I will avail myself of your gracious invitation, and prolong my stay for a few days. Tell the King," he added, to the cordelier, "that I am not a prisoner, but a highly-honoured guest of the King of France. Say that I have accomplished all I undertook. Say, further, that I could have returned with thee had I been so minded, but for many reasons, which his Majesty will understand, I deemed it best to remain here."

"I will repeat all that has been told me," rejoined the monk.

"Acquaint King Edward that to-morrow we proceed to Amiens," said Louis. "If his Majesty desires, to treat with me, and three days hence will send commissioners to the village of Corbie, near that town, I will send other commissioners to confer with them. You understand?"

"Perfectly, sire," replied the monk. "I will not fail to deliver your message."

While this was passing, Isidore gazed earnestly at the cordelier, but the latter sedulously avoided meeting his glance. Nor did he look at the young esquire as he withdrew.

Louis then rode on with his attendants to the Palace, while Tristan, in obedience to his Majesty's behests, escorted the friar on the road towards Peronne.

Late in the evening the cordelier arrived at the English camp, and was immediately taken to the royal tent. Edward was overjoyed to learn that Isidore was in safety, and was well satisfied with the message sent him by the French King.

Next day, as appointed, Louis set out for

Amiens, taking Isidore with him. He was accompanied by a large retinue of nobles and knights, and guarded by five hundred men-at-arms. The inhabitants of the town received him with every demonstration of delight. The church bells were rung, and cannon discharged from the walls.

The King first proceeded to the cathedral, where mass was celebrated, and the vast building being crowded on the occasion, presented a magnificent sight.

Louis fixed his quarters in the Chateau de Saint Remi, where his large retinue could be accommodated. Apartments in the chateau were, of course, assigned to Isidore and his attendant, Claude; and if the young esquire had been a prince, greater consideration could not have been shown him.

As the time approached when the terms of the peace he so ardently desired were to be settled, Louis redoubled his attentions to the English King's favourite, being still apprehensive of some miscarriage.

But all seemed to be going on smoothly, and a message was received from Edward stating that he agreed to the proposed meeting at Corbie, and would send his commissioners thither on the appointed day.

The commissioners appointed by the English King were the Lord Howard, subsequently created Duke of Norfolk; Sir Thomas Saint Leger, one of the King's body-guard; Dr. Morton, Bishop of Ely, who subsequently became Lord Chancellor and Archbishop of Canterbury; and Dr. Dudley, Dean of the Royal Chapel.

The commissioners chosen by Louis were Jean de Bourbon, Admiral of France, the Seigneur de Saint Pierre, and the Bishop of Evreux.

All difficulties seemed to have been removed, but still the suspicious King of France continued uneasy. He feared, and not without reason as it turned out, that the Duke of Burgundy would make a determined effort to break off the treaty. To guard against this eventuality, which might have destroyed all his plans, he induced Isidore to write a letter, to the King of England calculated to produce the desired effect.

XIII.

BY WHOSE CONTRIVANCE ISIDORE OVERHEARD WHAT PASSED BETWEEN LOUIS AND THE ENVOYS OF THE DUKE OF BURGUNDY AND THE CONSTABLE OF SAINT POL.

At this critical juncture, the Duke of Burgundy was at Valenciennes, and he, having received some intelligence that secret negotiations were going on between the two kings, he immediately despatched his chief councillor, the Sire de Coutai, to Louis, to make such terms with the King as he might deem advisable. At the same time, the Constable, Saint Pol sent the Sire de Sainville on an errand of a like nature.

Both ambassadors arrived at Amiens about the same time, but were not allowed to meet.

Anxious that Edward should know what dependence could be placed upon his allies, Louis devised a plan by which Isidore might overhear what passed at the audience.

In the reception-chamber was a large screen, behind which the Sire de Comines and the young esquire were concealed, while Louis sat down upon a fauteuil in front.

As soon as all was arranged, the Sire de Coutai was introduced, and immediately announced the Duke's willingness to enter into a separate treaty with the King, if terms could be agreed upon.

"What terms does the Duke require?" demanded Louis.

"Eu and St. Valery, sire," replied De Coutai.

"I will rather burn them to the ground than give them to him," replied Louis. "Tell the Duke, your master, that I am about to conclude a peace with the King of England, and if I gave those towns to any one, it would be to him, whom I have found loyal and honourable."

"I knew not that the treaty was so far advanced, sire," remarked De Coutai. "Methinks the Duke, my master, ought to have been informed of it."

"Wherefore?" demanded Louis, sternly.

The Duke of Burgundy has deceived his royal brother-in-law, and the King of England will no longer trust him. The English nobles and knights are boiling with rage at the tricks played them. Every treaty I have made with the Duke has been shamefully violated, and, by Saint Denis! I will not make another treaty with him, unless he chooses to cede to me a part of his possessions."

"That he will never do, sire!" said De Sainville.

And with a profound reverence to the King, he retired.

At a summons from Louis, De Comines and Isidore came from their place of concealment.

"Now what think you of the Duke of Burgundy?" said Louis to the young esquire.

"Unless I had overheard what has passed, I could not have believed in his duplicity and ill faith, sire," replied Isidore. "King Edward will never trust him more."

"King Edward is unlucky in his allies," remarked Louis, drily. "You will find that the Duke is more than matched by the Constable Saint Pol. But you must back again to your hiding-place, for here comes the Constable's envoy."

As De Comines and Isidore slipped behind the screen, the Sire de Sainville was introduced by the usher, and was very graciously received by the King.

"My Lord the Constable desires me to offer your Majesty the assurance of his entire devotion," said De Sainville. "He will act in any way you may command him. From the first, he has energetically combated with the Duke of Burgundy against his alliance with England, and has endeavored to induce

him to break it off. At last his representations have been successful."

"And for this good service I am indebted to the Constable?" remarked Louis.

"Entirely so, sire," remarked De Sainville.

"I know not what he said to the Duke; but I never saw his Grace in such a furious passion. Very little would have induced him to fall upon the English, and plunder them. He was especially enraged against his brother-in-law, the King of England, and spoke of him in no measured terms."

"Aha! what did he say? How looked he when he spoke?" demanded Louis.

"He looked half-frenzied, sire," replied De Sainville. "His gestures were as violent as his words. He stamped furiously on the ground thus," suiting the action to the word, "and smote the table with his gauntleted hand. This was the manner of his speech," continued De Sainville, trying to give an imitation of the tremendous voice: "By Saint George, this King of England has no royal blood in his veins. He is the son of Blagbourn, the handsome archer, who took the fancy of the Duchess of York. Fiends take him for a vile ingrate! When he fled from the Earl of Warwick, who made him a King, and then dethroned him, he came to me without a denier, and I gave him money, ships, and men, and enabled him to regain his kingdom, and now he abandons me! But, by my father's head! he shall regret it."

"Ha! ha!" laughed Louis. "Said he aught more?"

"Much, sire," replied De Sainville. And again mimicking the Duke's voice, he said, "This luxurious King has come here as if to a festival. He has brought with him a pack of fat citizens, who think only of feasting and carousing. In addition to these boon companions, he has brought with him his favourite, the fair Mistress Shore."

"Hold there!" cried Louis. "I will hear nought against Mistress Shore. She is accounted the handsomest woman in London. Nor can we match her in Paris. *Pâques-dieu!* King Edward did well to bring her. Had I been in his place, I would not have left her behind. Truly, the Duke must be mad to talk thus! But nath his choler abated?"

"N & a-whit, sire. He is still infuriated as ever against King Edward."

"And King Edward is justly indignant against him, so there is little chance of their reconciliation," remarked Louis. "I thank my good brother, the Constable, for the assurances he has given me of his attachment, but I cannot entertain any proposition from him for the present. I will send a messenger to him when I have aught to communicate."

With this, he dismissed De Sainville, who felt he had gained nothing, and that the wily King had been merely trifling with him.

As soon as the envoy was gone, De Comines said to himself again came forth.

"There is not much to choose between the

Duke and the Constable, you perceive," observed Louis, laughing.

"Know not which is worst," said Louis. "Better have an enemy like your Majesty, than such treacherous allies as these."

"That is precisely what I said," rejoined Louis.

I am impatient to recount what I have just heard to King Edward," cried the squire. "Shall I set out to the English camp at once?"

"No—defer your departure till the preliminaries of peace are settled," remarked Louis. "Should you be taken by the Duke of Burgundy or the Constable, a heavy ransom would be demanded for you. But even if there were no danger, I own I should be sorry to part with you."

"If I prolong my stay the King may grow impatient—"

"Write and reassure him. With such a hostage in my hands, I feel perfectly certain King Edward will perform his promises to me. He would be the first to laugh at me if I parted with you. So you must e'en tarry with me a little longer. I will do my best to amuse you."

Seeing it was useless to remonstrate, Isidore assented with a good grace, and withdrew.

De Comines was about to retire at the same time, but the King detained him.

"I have something for you to do," he said.

"I want a large sum of money—a very large sum. Cost what it may, we must get these English out of the country. We must refuse them nothing to get rid of them—nothing, except an acre of land, or a town. However short might be their stay, as in the time of the King, my father, the damage done would be enormous. Money must not be spared. The Chancellor must set out instantly for Paris, to raise the largest sum he can. Everybody must lend me money—everybody must aid me at this juncture. With money I can carry out my plans, and get rid of these accursed English, who have been brought here by that perfidious Charles the Bold, to serve his own purposes."

"Your Majesty need have no fear," said De Comines. "You will easily obtain all the money you require."

"Ay, but I must have it at once," cried the King. "If my coffers are replenished, they will soon be emptied again. Beside the sum to be paid to King Edward, I shall have to make large gifts to his brothers, the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester—to all his privy-councillors—to his grand Chamberlain, the Lord Hastings, who stands highest in his favour—to the Chancellor—to the Lord Howard—to Sir John Cheyne, the Master of the Horse—Sir Thomas Montgomery, and Sir Thomas Saint-Leger."

"Your Majesty must not omit the most important of all—the fair Mistress Shore," said De Comines.

"Hitherto, she has refused all I have offered her," said Louis; "but I have won her

by fair speeches. It may be she will accept some gift at parting. We shall see. King Edward could not have served me better than to send his mistress here. I marvel not he is so much enamoured of her. Of a truth, she is very charming."

De Comines smiled.

"Your Majesty must not take her from him," he said, "or most assuredly the truce will be broken."

"I have no such thought," cried Louis. "I am all anxiety to get rid of Edward and his army. We must keep them all in good humour till they go. Rich presents shall be distributed among the King's retinue. I must entertain them all—entertain them royally. Those fat citizens, of whom I hear, must be feasted; and the common soldiers must have wine enough to drown them. All the taverns in Amiens shall be thrown open to them."

"A grand scheme, and I doubt not it will answer your Majesty's expectations," remarked De Comines.

"But to carry it out, I must have money," cried Louis—"a vast sum, as I have stated."

"I see the necessity, sire," said De Comines. "The money shall be procured."

"Then about it at once!" cried Louis. "Let the Chancellor and the chief financiers set out for Paris without delay, and bring back with them two hundred thousand crowns."

XIV.

HOW THE SIRE DE MERANCOURT BECAME ENAMOURED OF JANE, AND OF THE STRATAGEM BY WHICH HE OBTAINED ADMITTANCE TO HER CHAMBER.

By this time it had become generally known that the handsome young envoy from the King of England was no other than the beautiful Mistress Shors in disguise, and several young nobles of the Court sought to win her regard, but she would listen to none of them.

The Sire de Merancourt, a daring and profligate young noble, famed for his successes, had made sure of an easy conquest, and was especially mortified by the repulse he received, but he determined not to give up the pursuit.

"Shoshall be mine," he said to the Seigneurs de Brasseur and Briquabee, with whom he was conversing. "It would be an eternal disgrace to us if she were allowed to return to her royal lover. If he loses her, as he will, he will only have himself to blame. It would be a poor compliment to our French gallantry to suppose that we should not make ourselves agreeable to her. She affects to be cold, as if it were possible a fair creature, who has excited so strong a passion in King Edward's breast as to make him neglect his Queen, could be cold!"

"No, no!" cried Briquabee; "and I hold it impossible she can be faithful to such an inconstant lover as King Edward. She is afraid there are too many spies about the Court, and that any little affair in which she might be engaged would come to the ears of her royal lover."

"Our King keeps a jealous watch over her; that is certain," remarked De Brasseur; "One would almost think he was in love with her himself."

"Despite all difficulties, she shall be mine!" cried Merancourt. "I have never yet found the woman who could resist me, nor shall fair Mistress Shors. To-night I am resolved to see her alone; but I must have recourse to stratagem to obtain admittance to her chamber. To-morrow, you shall hear how I have been received."

They then separated.

On that evening, Jane was alone in her room with Alicia. She had resumed her female attire, but her attendant was still in the garb of a page.

Just as they were about to retire to rest, a tap was heard at the outer door; and when it was incautiously opened by Alice, a richly-attired young noble stepped in, and passing through the ante-chamber, shut the door, and fastened it inside, before Alice could follow him.

All this was the work of a moment. Then, rushing up to Jane, he fell on his knees before her, and, seizing her hand, pressed it passionately to his lips.

"At length I behold you in the dress of your own sex!" he cried, with well-feigned rapture; "and I must be permitted to express my admiration of your beauty! Perfectly as your disguise suits you, your own costume is infinitely more becoming!"

"Cease this strain, my lord," she cried, endeavouring, but vainly, to snatch away her hand. "I will not listen to it. Why have you come hither at this hour? Had I not supposed you brought a message from the King, you would not have been admitted to this chamber! I must pray you at once to retire."

"Pardon me if I venture to disobey you, fair lady," he cried, quitting his kneeling position, but still retaining her hand. "If I am guilty of any apparent disrespect towards you, you must attribute it to the passion that overmasters me. I love you to distraction, and would run any risk for you. You cannot be insensible to love like mine!"

"Your words produce no other effect on me save displeasure, my lord," replied Jane, coldly; "and I must again beg you to retire, unless you would seriously offend me."

"Hear what I have to say!" cried Merancourt; "and if you still reject my suit, I will obey you. You cannot hope long to retain King Edward's love. Even now, perchance, it is on the wane, since he is noted for his inconstancy. But my love for you will be lasting. To me you will not be a toy, to be thought of for moments of dalliance, but an object of deep affection."

"I will hear no more," cried Jane, interrupting him angrily. "Leave me instantly, I command you."

"What if I refuse to go?" rejoined Merancourt.

"Then I will summon assistance!" she cried.

"I have taken all needful precautions to prevent interruption. My servants are without in the gallery."

"Alice!" she exclaimed, in alarm.

"Your attendant is shut up in the ante-chamber," he rejoined. "No one can come to you. You are completely in my power."

"Not so!" cried Jane. "I can rouse the palace with my shrieks!"

"Be silent, madame, on your life!" he exclaimed, in a menacing voice, and grasping her arm so tightly that she could not stir from the spot.

At this juncture, when all seemed lost, unlooked-for assistance arrived.

A loud authoritative voice was heard in the ante-chamber, which instantly caught the quick ear of Merancourt.

"Confusion! 'Tis the King!" he exclaimed.

"The King! Then I am saved!" cried Jane.

And bursting from him, she flew to the door of the ante-chamber, and drew back the bolt.

Next moment, Louis entered the inner room, followed by Tristan l'Hermite.

"*Tu-dieu*!" ejaculated the King. "Are we interrupting an amatory *tête-à-tête*?" But as no immediate reply was given, he said, sharply, "What brings you here, Sire de Merancourt?"

"Since your Majesty demands an answer, I have only to say that I came here by this fair lady's invitation," replied De Merancourt.

"'Tis false, sire!" cried Jane; "and, till now, I did not believe a French noble would seek to shield himself by a base subterfuge. The Sire de Merancourt came here for a dishonourable purpose, and I have to thank your Majesty for my preservation."

"I cannot for a moment doubt what you tell me, madame," rejoined Louis. "Nor does the Sire de Merancourt, who has thus sullied his proud name, attempt to contradict you. You are under arrest, my lord," he added to the young noble. "To-morrow we will decide upon your punishment."

As Tristan advanced to fulfil the King's command, Merancourt stepped towards Jane, and said,—

"Before I go hence, I ask forgiveness from this fair lady. My sole excuse," he added, in a penitential tone, "is that her charms have driven me distraught."

"And I am willing to attribute your conduct to disordered reason, my lord," said Jane. "I would please me best, sire, if this matter were forgotten," she added to the King.

"Since such is your desire, madam, I will not oppose it," said Louis; "though I feel I am dealing far too leniently with the offender. The Sire de Merancourt may thank you for his escape. What I came here to say to you must be reserved till to-morrow. May your sleep be sound after this disturbance, and no ill dreams annoy you!"

So saying, he departed, with Tristan.

Merancourt fixed an imploring look at Jane,

who averted her gaze from him, and, looking deeply, followed the King from the room.

XV.

OF THE TERRIBLE REPROACHES ADDRESSED BY CHARLES THE BOLD TO KING EDWARD.

MEANWHILE, the negotiation continued without interruption.

A conference took place at Corbie, as appointed, between the French and English commissioners, and the terms of the treaty having been definitively settled by them, it was agreed that the two monarchs should hold an interview at Picquigny, when they could mutually swear to the performance of the conditions.

Intelligence of this important arrangement having reached the Duke of Burgundy, who was then at Luxembourg, he set off at once with a retinue of only sixteen men, and on the evening of the same day arrived at the English camp.

Dismounting at the entrance of the royal pavilion, he burst abruptly into the King's presence.

Edward, who was conferring with the Lord Howard at the time, instantly arose on the Duke's entrance, but forbore to embrace him. For a few moments they stood gazing at each other.

"The Duke was the first to break silence."

"I would speak to you alone," he said.

At a sign from his royal master, Lord Howard instantly retired.

As soon as they were alone, the Duke advanced somewhat nearer to the King, and, regarding him fiercely, said,—

"Is it true you have made peace with Louis without consulting me?"

"Nothing can be more certain," replied Edward. "The negotiation was concluded two days ago, at Corbie, between the Admiral of France, the Lord of Saint Pierre, and the Bishop of Evroux, on the part of Louis, and the Lord Howard and three chief commissioners, on my part. I was about to send you word that the treaty was signed."

As Edward spoke thus calmly, the Duke made an effort to repress his wrath; but it now burst forth with perfect fury, and he stamped and foamed with wrath.

"Ha! by Saint George! by our Lady! by our Lord and Master!" he cried, dabbing in pieces a small table that stood near him. "You have signed your own dishonour! You consent, at the bidding of the wily Louis, to recross the sea without fighting a single battle—without even splashing a lance! Have you forgotten what was done by your valiant ancestor, King Edward the Third?—how, with much smaller force than yours, he invaded France, and gained the glorious battles of Crécy and Poitiers? Have you forgotten the great deeds of Henry the Fifth, whose race you have extinguished, and whose son you have murdered? With half the number of men you have brought with you, King Henry fought and conquered at Azincourt! Nor

would he return till he was master of France. And you," he continued, in accents of the deepest scorn—"you, who boast of having won nine battles, now propose to depart, having done nothing, and won nothing! You allow yourself to be cajoled, and accept a worthless peace!"

After a momentary pause, he went on.

"Mistake me not. 'Tis the maintenance of your honour that brings me here. To me this ignominious truce matters nothing. Not for my own interest did I counsel you to invade France. I do not need your aid. Charles of Burgundy can defend himself against his foes, as his foes will find. Farewell, brother!"

And he turned to depart, but Edward called out to him.

"Stay, brother. I have listened to you patiently—too patiently, perchance—and, by heaven! you shall now listen to me."

"Say on, then," cried the Duke, sternly. "But think not to move me."

Edward then went on, the calm dignity of his deportment forming a marked contrast to the Duke's violence.

"Better than any one else, brother," he said, "you are acquainted with the motives of my voyage to this country, and if you choose to forget them, I must refresh your memory. Amiens and other towns had been taken from you by Louis, and despite all your efforts, you could not regain them."

"By Our Lady! I shall regain them, and without your aid," cried the Duke.

"But your design in bringing me here," pursued Edward, "was that I should hold Louis in check, and keep him from Flanders and Artois, while you made war on your own account on parts of Germany and Lorraine. To lure me over, you made abundance of fair promises, and declared I should win mountains of gold. You would wait for me, you said, in the Boulonnais, with a large army. Where are your knights, your men-at-arms, and your foot soldiers?—melted like snow in the sun. When you came to me in Calais, you had not even a page to attend you."

"I might have had a fair dame, disguised as an esquire, to accompany me, had I so chosen," observed the Duke, scornfully.

"An idle taunt," said Edward. "I came to France solely to aid you; but since, owing to your folly, you are unable to carry out your projects, I have nothing more to do here. Had I desired to fight for the honour of England, I should have acted very differently. Not requiring your help, I should have made the invasion at the time and place that best suited me; and ere I had been in France a week, several towns taken or burnt, and a multitude of enemies destroyed, would have shown that it was England's quarrel, and not Burgundy's, in which I was engaged."

"You talked otherwise, brother, when you sought my aid to regain your kingdom," observed Charles, in a tone of haughty reproach. "And I refused you, Henry VI., or his son, whom you have slain, would now be on the

throne of England. For the last time I ask, are you resolved to make this disgraceful peace?"

"Firmly resolved; nor do I hold the peace to be disgraceful," rejoined Edward. "I shall sign the treaty, and, by Heaven's grace, I will keep it."

"Be it so," cried the Duke, furiously; "Louis has completely outwitted you. This stain upon your arms will dim the splendour of all your former exploits."

Thereupon, he quitted the pavilion, and, mounting his charger, rode off with his slender retinue.

Though highly incensed, Edward did not seek to stay him.

XVI.

SHOWING IN WHAT MANNER THE WHOLE ENGLISH ARMY WAS ENTERTAINED BY KING LOUIS AT AMIENS.

So delighted was Louis with the result of the negotiation, and so fearful lest some misunderstanding should arise before the treaty was concluded, that he spared nothing to keep the English in good humour.

Presents were bestowed with a lavish hand. Annual pensions were promised to Edward's privy-councillors, to the Lord Hastings two thousand crowns, to the Lord Chancellor a like sum, and one thousand crowns each to the Marquis of Dorset, the Lord Howard, and Sir John Cheyne. Numberless other presents were made, both jewels and money, by the open-handed French monarch; and as he had now raised a large loan in Paris, he cared not what sums he spent.

As a boon to the English soldiers, by whom we may be sure it was highly appreciated, he sent a hundred charrettes, laden with good wine, to the English camp, which, since the truce had been agreed upon, had been pitched on the banks of the Somme, within a league of Amiens.

Twenty waggons followed, laden with provisions, so that the whole army could make good cheer. This extraordinary liberality on the part of Louis produced the effect anticipated, and put all the men in good humour.

But the French King's hospitality did not end here. He caused it to be announced in the English camp that all knights and esquires, and all the chief men-at-arms, would be welcome at Amiens; that all the taverns in the town would be thrown open to them, and that they would everywhere be entertained free of cost. Special invitations were given to nobles and distinguished personages, and to the citizens of London.

At first, this invitation was laughed at as a jest, but those who rode from the camp to Amiens found it was seriously made. Four long tables had been placed at the north gate, furnished with all kinds of delicious viands, hams, tongues, dried fish, and a profusion of the best wines of Bordeaux.

The King's chamberlains, the Seigneur de Craon, Briquet, Bouchard, and others, pre-

sided over the tables, and when an English knight appeared, a groom went up to him, and bowing respectfully, led his horse to one of the chamberlains, who courteously besought him to alight, saying, "Come, and break a lance with us, fair sir!" A place was then found him at the table, and assiduous serving-men ministered to his wants.

As will be readily conjectured, the tables became so crowded that not a place could be found, and those who came late were sent on to the taverns, where they were hospitably entertained.

A goodly sight it was to see the English knights received thus courteously by their somewhat enemies, who now challenged them only with goblets of wine, and the French King's courtiers were infinitely amused by the scene.

But none of the English were so gratified by their reception as the citizens of London. For more than a week these self-indulgent personages had been restricted to poor fare, and had drunk but little wine. Dainties of all kinds were now set before them, with abundance of fine wines, and they feasted as joyously as if they had been at some great City banquet, and drank the health of their royal host in flowing cups. Louis had given orders that they should want nothing, and his injunctions were obeyed.

But as the festival went on, the courtesy of the chamberlains and the civility of the attendants were severely tried by their guests, who began to wax noisy and insolent, and quarrels were with difficulty averted.

If the knights were troublesome, it was still worse with the men-at-arms and archers, who now began to flock into the town in crowds, invaded the taverns and private houses, and drank to excess. Had the French been disposed to fall upon them when they were thus stupefied, they could easily have massacred them all. But Louis had no such design. The Sire de Torci, grand master of the cross-bowmen, complained to him of the disorderly conduct of the English soldiers, but the King commanded him not to interfere, dreading lest a quarrel should begin.

Next day, however, the influx of English soldiers into the town became so great that the guard grew alarmed, and the Sire de Comines deemed it necessary to warn the King, who was preparing to attend mass in the cathedral.

"Sire," said the councillor, "I am unwilling to interfere with your devotions; but the matter on which I have to speak to you is urgent. Something must be done, or mischief will infallibly ensue. More than nine thousand English soldiers are now in Amiens."

"*Diable! Nine thousand!*" exclaimed the King, amazed.

"Yes, sire, and they are all armed. Others are continually arriving, and none are stopped at the gate, for fear of giving them offence. I have your Majesty's consideration for your former, that has been carried a little too far."

"*Péque-dieu!* this must be stopped," cried Louis. "Mount at once. Ride to the English camp as quickly as you can, and see Lord Hastings, or Lord Howard, or some other English noble of sufficient authority to stop the invasion. If need be, see the King himself. Away with you. I will meet you on your return at the north gate."

As the Sire de Comines departed on his errand, Louis—who was not very seriously alarmed, for he thought the numbers had been greatly exaggerated by his councillor—proceeded to the Cathedral.

As he entered the sacred edifice, justly accounted one of the noblest structures in France, he found the whole interior thronged with English soldiers.

Though somewhat alarmed at first, he was quickly reassured by the quiet deportment of the men, who were looking upwards at the lofty roof; surveying the enormous pillars lining the aisles, peering into the numerous beautiful chapels, or gazing with wonder at the three magnificent rose windows adorning the transept.

Thus occupied, they did not even notice the King's entrance by a side door. When the solemn service commenced, they all knelt down, and at its close departed without making any disturbance.

Wishing to ascertain as far as he could by personal observation what was going on outside the town, Louis determined to mount the Cathedral tower, and though Tristan endeavoured to dissuade him, he persisted, and accomplished the ascent.

Two other persons were on the summit of the tower when he reached it with Tristan, and these proved to be Isidore and Claude.

"I did not expect to find you here," said Louis, as soon as he recovered sufficient breath to speak.

"I came here to look at the English camp, sire, since I am not allowed to go there," rejoined Isidore.

"Can you see it?" cried Louis.

"Distinctly, sire," was the reply. "I can point out the King's pavilion to your Majesty."

"Show it me," said Louis, advancing to the battlement.

About half a league off, in a broad plain, contiguous to the River Somme, and surrounded by fine trees, lay the English camp, presenting a vast array of tents, in front of which stood Edward's large cloth of gold pavilion, plainly distinguishable, as well for its superior size and splendour as from the royal standard floating above it. Close beside the pavilion a clump of spears was collected, and the sunbeams glittered brightly on their polished helms and armour.

Riding slowly along the central alley of the camp, attended by a score of knights, was a majestic personage, mounted on a richly-trapped charger. Isidore felt sure this must be the King, and Louis himself entertained the same opinion. The whole camp seemed

astir, and various martial sounds, such as the beating of drums and the fanfares of trumpets, were distinctly audible, even at that distance.

But the attention of Louis was chiefly attracted by the number of men-at-arms marching from the camp to Amiens. Now and then, a knight, or a few mounted archers, rode in the same direction; but, generally speaking, the throng consisted of foot-soldiers.

From the lofty position he had taken up, a very good idea could be formed by Louis of the actual state of the town, and it was such as to cause him considerable uneasiness. Of course, the ramparts and gates were guarded by his own soldiers, as was the Château de Saint Remi, where a large body of troops were assembled, but all the public places seemed filled with English archers and men-at-arms, who far outnumbered the French.

"Grand Dieu!" exclaimed Louis, filled with consternation at the sight. "How are we to get rid of them?"

"Only let them drink enough, sir," rejoined Tristan, significantly, "and I warrant they shall not trouble your Majesty long."

"May the fiend take thee for the villainous suggestion!" said Louis, sharply. "No harm must be done them. They are my guests, and shall depart in safety."

"But they are quarrelsome, sire, and our soldiers will brook no insults," said Tristan.

"If a quarrel arises, our own soldiers will be in fault, because they will disobey my express injunctions," said Louis. "Therefore, punish them—not the English."

"I would these accursed Englishmen had never been allowed to enter the town!" grumbled Tristan. "I fear they will never return to their own quarters!"

"If your Majesty will allow me to go to the English camp, I am sure I can prevail upon King Edward to recall them," said Isidore.

"No, no; I do not desire to trouble the King," cried Louis. "Return to the Castle, and do not stir forth again unless I send for you."

Without another word, he descended from the tower, followed by Tristan, and immediately quitting the Cathedral, repaired to the north gate.

There he found several of his captains, and ordered each of them to assemble a hundred men secretly in his quarters, so as to be ready in case of emergency. Moreover, he directed that the guard at the Castle should be doubled—giving strict instructions that the slightest disposition to tumult should be everywhere repressed, but that the greatest forbearance should be shown towards the English.

These orders given, he proceeded to the long tables outside the gate, which were still crowded as before. All the guests arose on his appearance, and made the place resound with their shouts.

After pledging them in a cup of wine, Louis

begged them to be seated, and turned his attention to the citizens of London, who had again found their way to the place of entertainment. They were charmed with the King's gracious manner, as were all whom he addressed, and matters were proceeding most satisfactorily, when the Sire de Comines returned from the English camp, bringing with him Lord Hastings, the Earl of Northumberland, and Lord Howard.

On seeing these nobles, Louis felt quite easy. He received them without ceremony, and invited them to a repast, which he had caused to be set out in the guard-chamber of the gate.

XVII.

HOW THE SIRE DE MERANCOURT AGAIN ATTEMPTED TO CARRY OUT HIS DESIGN, AND BY WHOM HE WAS SLAIN.

MEANWHILE, Isidore and Claude, in obedience to the King's commands, had quitted the tower of the Cathedral, and returned to their apartments in the Château de Saint Remi, where they remained till evening.

Isidore had heard of the arrival of the English nobles, and fully expected they would bring him some message from King Edward; but none came, and he did not attempt to conceal his disappointment.

"Methinks the King has forgotten me," he said. "He is content that I should remain as a hostage for him, and cares not to send me a word when an opportunity offers, though he knows how welcome a message would be. As to Lord Hastings and the others, their negligence is inexcusable. They ought to have waited upon me as soon as they had seen King Louis."

"But consider what they have to do!" said Claude. "It will be no easy matter, even for Lord Hastings, to get back these unruly soldiers, now they have broken loose. Be sure no disrespect is intended you. Your term of probation will soon be over. Two days hence, the truce will be signed, and then you will be at liberty once more."

"That will be delightful!" cried Isidore. "Oh, how glad I shall be to return to England! I am quite tired of France."

Thus they continued to converse, till it began to grow dark, and Isidore had given up hopes of seeing Lord Hastings, or any other English noble, when an attendant entered the room, having with him a page, who said that he was come to conduct the young esquire to the King.

"I will attend him at once," replied Isidore, joyfully. "Where is his Majesty?"

At the north gate of the town, replied the page. "There are several English nobles with him."

"You hear!" cried Isidore, to Claude. "They have not forgotten us."

"So it seems," replied Claude. "Shall I accompany you?"

Isidore assented, but the page said his

orders were only to bring the young esquire; so Claude was, perforce, left behind.

Wholly unsuspecting of any ill design, Isidore quitted the chamber by a postern, and entered a public place, which was now filled with English soldiers, evidently fresh from the tavern.

To avoid these men, the page turned into a narrow thoroughfare, which appeared totally free from obstruction, though it did not seem to Isidore to lead in the direction of the north gate.

It was now growing dark; and as there were no lights in the houses, the streets they were tracking had a gloomy and deserted look, and offered a strong contrast to the noisy and crowded public place they had just quitted.

As they went on, Isidore noticed two persons about fifty yards in front, one of whom turned round ever and anon, as if to watch them.

Trifling as was this circumstance, it caused him some alarm; but his uneasiness was increased when he perceived they were followed by another individual, who appeared to regulate his pace by theirs, and kept at a certain distance behind them.

At the same time, Isidore began to suspect that the page was taking him in a wrong direction, and he questioned him on the point.

"Are you sure this street leads to the north gate?" he asked.

"Quite sure," replied the other. "I have brought you this way to avoid those drunken English soldiers."

Somewhat reassured by the answer, Isidore went on, until a gateway could be distinguished, communicating, no doubt, with some large mansion; and near this gateway the two persons, who had thus far preceded them, suddenly halted.

Isidore's misgivings now returned, and with redoubled force; and he would have retreated, if he had not perceived that the third individual was still behind.

He, therefore, endeavoured to pass on; but one of the persons who had inspired him with so much terror stopped him, and said, in accents that were instantly recognised as those of the *Sire de Merancourt*,—

"Will not the fair Mistress Shore deign to enter my house?"

"I know not what you mean," replied the supposed esquire; "but I cannot be hindered. My attendant will tell you that I on the way to the King."

"The King must wait for you, fair lady," said Merancourt. "The stratagem has succeeded perfectly, and has placed you in my hands. Enter, I beg of you."

"You will repeat your audacious design, my lord," rejoined Jane. "I will rather die than enter your house. Release me, I command you!"

"Do not compel me to use force, madame," said Merancourt. "You cannot escape me now. The gate is open, and will be closed as soon as you have passed through it. I will then defy King Edward—ay, even with

our own King to aid him—to take you from me!"

"You will for ever stain your name, my lord, if you commit this infamous act!" cried Jane, struggling to free herself from him. "Help, help!"

"You call in vain," he rejoined. "No help will come."

"You are mistaken, villain!" cried a voice that thrilled through Jane's breast, and instantly dispelled her fears. "Defend yourself!"

Next moment, a knightly personage—it was the same individual who had followed her at a distance, and inspired her with distrust, like the others—came up, and attacked Merancourt, sword in hand.

Thus assailed, the libertine noble was compelled to relinquish his hold of Jane, who, however, did not take to flight, but awaited the issue of the conflict.

It was of brief duration.

Merancourt soon found he had a formidable antagonist to deal with. His sword was stricken from his grasp; while, at the same time, a tremendous downward blow from his adversary's weapon cut through his steel cap, and stretched him lifeless on the ground. Merancourt's attendant took no part in the combat, nor did he exhibit disposition to molest Jane.

Things remained in this state for a few moments, when the household, alarmed by the page, rushed forth with torches, and revealed a terrible scene.

Beside the body of the traitorous noble he had slain, stood the tall and majestic figure of a knight, clad in magnificent armour. He was leaning upon his sword, and the supposed esquire was clinging to his arm.

Not far off was Merancourt's pusillanimous attendant, who called upon the household to avenge their slaughtered lord, and they were preparing to make an attack upon the knight, when the sound of horses' footsteps was heard rapidly approaching, and, the next moment, a large party rode up to the spot.

At the head of the party was the French King in person, and with him were the *Sire de Comines*, *Tristan*, the Lord *Hastings*, and the other English nobles, who had come over from the camp. Louis was followed by some half-dozen grooms, and a small escort of mounted archers.

"*Pâques-dieu!*" he exclaimed, gazing at the scene. "*De Merancourt slain!*"

"Yes, sire; he deserved his fate," rejoined Jane. "I have been rescued, as you perceive, by this English knight."

"By Our Lady, he has done well!" exclaimed Louis; "although he has robbed my cousin, *Tristan*, of a fee. But how is your deliverer called?" he asked, gazing at the tall knight, who had now lowered his visor.

Before replying, Jane consulted the knight, and then said,—

"With your Majesty's permission, he desires to preserve his anonymity."

"As he will," rejoined Louis; "though I should have been glad to have a little talk with him. Perchance he does not know our language?"

"He speaks it perfectly, sire," replied Jane.

"Then let him ask me a boon, and, by Saint Louis, my ancestor, I will grant it!" replied the King.

"I take you at your word, sire," said the tall knight, stepping forward, and making a stately bow. "Tis plain, from what has just happened, that the charge of this fair lady must be a great trouble to your Majesty. Lest any further mischief should happen, I will ask you to allow me to conduct her in safety to King Edward."

"But I hold her as a hostage," cried Louis.

"Have no fear, sire," said the knight; "King Edward will perform his promise."

"You answer for him?" cried Louis.

"As for myself, sire," replied the knight.

"Then take her to him. By my faith, I shall not be sorry to be rid of the responsibility. Tell my good cousin, King Edward, that I have done my best to look after her, but, as he wots well, a precious jewel is more easily guarded than a fair woman. I would have hanged this daring traitor had he stolen the prize, but still the King might not have been altogether content."

"Tis better as it is, sire," replied the knight.

And, with another stately bow to the King, he sprang upon a charger brought him by a groom while the previous discourse took place.

At the same time Jane was provided with a palfrey by Claude, who, it appeared, was among the attendants of the English nobles.

"A word at parting," said Louis, signing to Jane, who came close up to him.

Lowering his voice to a whisper, he then added, "King Edward must be at Picquigny on the appointed day. Come with him."

"Rely on me, sire," she replied.

And, bending low, she joined the knight.

The English nobles then took leave of Louis with every mark of respect, and Lord Hastings assured his Majesty that he should experience no further annoyance from the soldiers who had so much abused his hospitality, and who should thenceforward be kept strictly within the camp.

As they turned to depart, Louis ordered De Comines to escort them to the north gate.

As soon as they were gone, he remarked to Tristan, with a singular smile, "Canst thou not guess the name and rank of that tall knight by whom De Merancourt has been slain?"

"No, sire," replied the provost-marshal; "but I conclude he is some one of importance, from the attention paid him by your Majesty."

"So far thou art right, gossip," rejoined Louis. "He is a person of the utmost importance—no other than the King of England."

The King of England!" exclaimed Tristan, in astonishment. "And your Majesty had him in your power, and allowed him to depart! *Dieu!* I could not have believed it."

XVIII.

HOW A WOODEN BRIDGE WAS BUILT ACROSS THE SOMME, AT PICQUIGNY, BY LOUIS, FOR HIS PROPOSED INTERVIEW WITH THE KING OF ENGLAND.

PICQUIGNY, the little village selected by Louis XI for his proposed interview with Edward IV, belonged to the Vidame of Amiens, and was distant about three leagues from that town.

It was situated upon the Somme, which, though not very wide at the point, was extremely deep—a circumstance to which Louis attached the utmost importance, as he did not desire that the English troops should be able to ford the river. On a high, rocky hill dominating the village, stood a large chateau, bearing a strong resemblance to Windsor Castle; but this fortress was now in ruins, having been partially destroyed by the Duke de Bourbon.

Having chosen the spot, after due consideration, Louis caused a wooden bridge to be constructed at Picquigny, according to his own plans. In the centre of the bridge, which, though merely intended for a temporary purpose, was solidly built, was a sort of latticed cabinet, or shed, divided in the midst by stout oaken bars, placed so close together, that only a man's arm could be thrust between them. Neither door nor wicket was allowed, consequently no one could pass through the barrier. By this means all danger of a sudden and treacherous attack was avoided.

Roofed with boards, the structure was sufficiently large to contain a dozen persons on either side. The bridge was protected by high rails, and was exceedingly narrow, so that those using it were almost compelled to proceed singly.

Only a small boat, with one oarsman, was to be allowed on the river during the meeting.

Louis had been led to take all these precautions from a terrible incident that had occurred at the meeting between his father, then Dauphin of France, and Duke John of Burgundy, on the bridge of Montreuil, and, as he justly alluded to this tragical occurrence, it may be proper to narrate it.

When Duke John of Burgundy advanced with a powerful army, to raise the siege of Rouen, it was agreed between him and the Dauphin, afterwards Charles VII, that they should hold a meeting at the bridge of Montreuil.

In the middle of the bridge a strong barrier was therefore erected, shut by a gate that could be bolted on either side. All the Duke's serving-men tried to dissuade him from the interview, telling him he would be betrayed, but their prayers and entreaties were of no avail.

THE MEETING OF EDWARD AND LOUIS. (See page 65.)



A Jew, belonging to his house, told him if he went he would never return. Nothing would deter him. Setting out with four hundred men-at-arms, he arrived at Montereau about two o'clock, and at once proceeding to the barrier with his attendants, found the Sire de Beauveau and Tanneguy's Duchâtel ready to receive him.

"Monsieur awaits you," said Tanneguy, bowing.

Having taken the oath, the Duke said, "You see that I and the Sire de Navailles are unarmed."

No sooner had he passed on, than Tanneguy urged De Navailles to follow.

The Dauphin was already in the wooden cabinet in the middle of the bridge, with his attendants. The Duke advanced, and, taking off his black velvet cap, bent the knee to the Prince, who immediately raised him.

Then Tanneguy shouted, "Kill! kill!" Whereupon the Dauphin's attendants struck down the Duke with their battle-axes and swords, and likewise slew the Sire de Navailles who attempted to defend his master.

A crowd of armed men then rushed on the bridge from the side of the town, and all the Burgundian knights were seized and made prisoners.

Such was the terrible occurrence that caused Louis to be so cautious in constructing the barrier at Picquigny.

Apparently, he had no desire to repeat his father's treacherous act, which had been attended by direful consequences, and he probably reflected that if Edward should be slain like the Duke of Burgundy, a large army, with skilful leaders, was close at hand to avenge his death.

But Louis was not altogether free from fear that some treachery might be practised against himself. No gate was therefore allowed in the middle of the bridge.

At length the day arrived appointed for the meeting of the two monarchs.

On the morning a circumstance occurred which, in that superstitious age, could not fail to be regarded as a favourable omen by the whole English army. A white dove alighted on Edward's pavilion, and remained there till the King set out for the interview.

The first, however, to arrive at Picquigny was King Louis, who was still fearful something might go wrong.

Attended by eight hundred picked men-at-arms, he had with him the Duke de Bourbon, and the Cardinal de Bourbon, Archbishop of Lyons, besides many other nobles and knights. His three favourites, Tristan l'Hermite, Olivier le Dain, and Jacques Coctier, were likewise in attendance upon him.

On this occasion, as a mark of special favour, or it may be from some other motive, Philippe de Comines was attired precisely like his Majesty, in a gown of black velvet, and wore round his neck the collar of Saint Michael.

All the arrangements were made in obedi-

ence to the King's commands. The bridge had been completed on the day before, and now formed the object to which all eyes were directed.

On one side floated the French oriflamme—on the other the royal standard of England. A dozen mounted arbalestriers guarded the left bank; while a like number of English archers were stationed at the opposite entrance.

The village of Picquigny, and the partly-demolished chateau, were occupied by the French men-at-arms, and it was clear that their position was the most advantageous, the bank on this side being high, and the road good, whereas the ground on the other side was flat and marshy, and the causeway extremely narrow.

Had treachery been intended, this approach would have been fraught with danger to Edward. But he had no distrust. Indeed, the sight of his army, drawn up in battle array at no great distance, was well calculated to reassure him.

That mighty host, with its knights clad in glittering mail, its lances, its archers, its men-at-arms, and its long train of artillery, presented a most imposing appearance, and increased the anxiety of Louis to get rid of such a strong hostile force. He watched Edward as he rode along the narrow and dangerous causeway, just described, and could not help admiring his goodly presence.

Splendidly attired in cloth of gold, with his girdle blazing with gems, the English monarch wore a black velvet cap, ornamented with a large *fleur-de-lys* of diamonds. Never did he look more regal than on this occasion; and his stately figure, handsome countenance, and majestic deportment not only excited the admiration of Louis, but of all who beheld him. He rode a magnificently-trapped war-horse, with housings covered with the royal cognizances.

Close behind him, and mounted on a palfrey, came a young esquire, whose slight, graceful figure was displayed to the greatest advantage in a doublet of white velvet, embroidered with silver, hose of white silk, and brodequins of crimson morocco. A cap of blue velvet, adorned with a white plume, covered his sunny locks.

The Duke of Clarence, who came next, was almost as superbly attired as his royal brother, but he could not for a moment be compared with him. Gloucester was absent, having declined to attend the meeting. Then came the Earl of Northumberland, the Marquis of Dorset, and the Lords Hastings and Howard, all four arrayed in blue cloth of gold, and well mounted.

Then followed the Bishop of Lincoln, at that time Chancellor of England. The Chancellor was attended by Sir John Cheyne and Sir Thomas Montgomerie.

A body-guard of a hundred lances, commanded by Sir Thomas Saint Leger, accompanied the King.

As Edward rode on by the side of the deep-

flowing river, and gazed at the bridge on which the interview was to take place, some misgivings crossed him, and he began to think he had been outwitted by the wily French King. Was the treaty really as ignominious as it had been styled by the Duke of Burgundy? If so, it might yet be broken.

Agitated by these thoughts, he glanced at Isidore, who, reading what was passing in his breast, urged him by a look to go on.

On reaching the pavilion placed near the entrance of the bridge, Edward was greatly surprised to find there was not a French noble—not even a page—stationed there to receive him, but he soon understood that no one could cross the bridge.

Laughing at the unusual precautions taken by Louis, he waited till his retinue had assembled, and then alighting, stepped upon the bridge, closely followed by Isidore.

XIX.

IN WHOSE PRESENCE THE MEETING TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE TWO MONARCHS, AND HOW THE TREATY AGREED UPON WAS SWORN TO BY THEM.

As Edward advanced at a slow and dignified pace, he could see Louis watching him from behind the barrier, like some wild animal peering through the bars of a cage.

On his part, however, the French King was greatly struck by the good looks of the English monarch, for he remarked to De Comines, "By my faith! our good cousin is very handsome."

"And note you not, sire, that the King has got Isidore with him?" rejoined the councillor.

"Ay; all will go well," said Louis.

With the French King were a dozen nobles—the most important among them being the Duke de Bourbon, and his brother, the Cardinal,—but they were almost hidden from view by the barrier.

Behind Edward came the Duke of Clarence, the Chancellor, the Earl of Northumberland, the Marquis of Dorset, Lord Hastings, and other nobles and knights.

On arriving within a few paces of Louis, whom he could now distinguish perfectly, with De Comines standing behind him in precisely similar attire, Edward removed his velvet cap, and made a profound reverence, almost bending his knee to the ground.

Louis returned the salutation with equal form, after which they both arose, and embraced each other as well as they could through the bars.

"You are right welcome, cousin," exclaimed the French King, in tones of the utmost cordiality, and with a look of perfect good-nature. "There is no one on earth whom I more desire to see than you. Heaven has praised that we met at last under such agreeable circumstances, and with such kindly feelings towards each other."

"I heartily reciprocate your Majesty's sentiments," replied Edward. "I am overjoyed to

meet a monarch who has justly acquired a reputation for consummate genius and wisdom. Believe, I pray you, that it has been matter of the greatest regret to me whenever I have had a difference with your Majesty."

"Let all that be forgotten, cousin," said Louis, with great bonhomie. "We are good friends now, and I hope shall long continue so. I rejoice to see you, and all those with you—and not the least, the young esquire who has lately been my guest. But a truce to compliments! Let us to business."

"By all means, sire," replied Edward. "We are quite ready."

At a sign from him, the Chancellor advanced. He was in his ecclesiastical habits, and spoke as follows, in solemn and impressive accents—

"When two of the most powerful monarchs on earth meet together to settle a dispute—not by arms, but peaceably and reasonably—it is a joyful thing for themselves and for their people, but it is also highly pleasing to our blessed Lord, whose kingdom is of peace. It was said of old that in Picquigny a great peace would be concluded, and the prediction has now come to pass, and in a most remarkable manner. Moreover, another wonderful thing has happened. This very morn-
a dove, white as silver, alighted on the tent of the King of England, and remained there for some time, in the sight of the whole army."

"Shewing that the peace is approved by Heaven," said Louis, bowing his head reverently; "since the dove is the emblem of peace. Did not the Holy Spirit, in the form of a dove, appear at the baptism of our Lord, who is the Prince of Peace. There cannot be a better omen."

After reciting a prayer, during which Louis knelt down devoutly, the Chancellor proceeded to read the conditions of the treaty.

This done, the most important part of the performance took place, and the incident excited great curiosity among the spectators.

Owing to the separation of the two monarchs by the barrier, some little difficulty was experienced in carrying out the ceremonial about to be described; but, at last, it was satisfactorily accomplished.

Each sovereign, placing one hand upon a missal, and the other on a portion of the true cross held towards him by the Chancellor, solemnly swore to observe and maintain the conditions of the treaty, which was to remain in force for seven years.

The guardians of the treaty, on the part of the King of England, were the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, the Chancellor, the Keeper of the Privy Seal, the Governor of the Cinque Ports, and the Lieutenant-Governor of Calais.

Those on the part of the King of France were the Sire de Beaucien, and Jean de Bourbon, Admiral of France. Next, the King of France engaged, not for himself alone, but for his successors, to pay to the King of England,

annually, the sum of fifty thousand crowns, to be delivered at the Tower of London; promising, also, to contract for a loan with the bankers Medicis, of Florence.

A marriage was likewise agreed upon between the Dauphin and the Lady Elizabeth of England—Louis agreeing to pay to the Princess a pension of fifty thousand crowns.

On his part, Edward agreed to return to England with his whole army, as soon as he had received the sum of seventy-five thousand crowns, without taking or attacking any town on the way, and to leave as hostages the Lord Howard and Sir John Cheney—with one other person, to be named by the King of France.

A final stipulation was made by Louis for the liberation, on payment of a ransom of fifty thousand crowns, of Margaret of Anjou, then a prisoner in the Tower of London.

All being arranged, Louis, who was in high glee, said to Edward,—

"You must come and see us in Paris, cousin. I will *fitte* you as well as I can, and you will find there some of the fairest ladies in France, who will be delighted to see a monarch so renowned for good looks and gallantry."

"Your Majesty tempts me very strongly," replied Edward. "Having heard so much of the Parisian dames, I would fain ascertain whether they are as charming as represented."

"Report scarcely does them justice, as you will find, cousin," said Louis, still laughing.

"Nay, then; I must needs accept your Majesty's invitation," cried Edward. "Before I return, I will spend a month with you at the Louvre."

Louis seemed rather disconcerted. A month was much more than he had calculated upon. But Isidore came to his assistance.

"What will become of the army while your Majesty is enjoying yourself at Paris for a month?" remarked the page.

"Bah! the army can remain at Calais," replied Edward, carelessly.

"That will scarcely suit his Majesty of France, methinks," said Isidore. "Besides, it will infringe the main condition of the treaty."

"You are right," cried Louis, hastily. "In my desire to entertain my good cousin, I had overlooked this difficulty. I fear I must defer the pleasure of seeing your Majesty to another occasion," he added, to Edward.

"But the chances are I shall not be in France again," said Edward. "If I neglect this opportunity, I may never see your beautiful city."

"Oh, your Majesty will be sure to come over when the Lady Elizabeth is married to the Dauphin," said Isidore.

"Certainly," replied Louis. "I shall expect you then, cousin, and will prepare some magnificent *fêtes* for you."

"But the fair dames will have grown old by that time," said Edward.

"Others, equally fair, will have succeeded them," rejoined Louis. "And now a word, cousin. As you are aware, I have stipulated for a third hostage. My choice falls on this young esquire. He shall go with me to Amiens, but I will send him back before you embark at Calais."

"Are you content with the arrangement?" said Edward to the esquire.

"Perfectly," was the reply. "I have experienced too much kindness from his Majesty to entertain a doubt that he will take good care of me."

"Then be it so," said Edward. "If you fail to come to Calais, I shall return to fetch you," he added, with a laugh.

At the King of England's request, De Comines was then presented to him by Louis.

Edward received him very graciously, and shook hands with him through the barrier.

"'Tis not the first time I have met the Sire de Comines," he said. "I saw him in Flanders, and was much beholden to him for the trouble he took to do me a service at the time of the revolts of the Earl of Warwick. I hope to have an early opportunity of proving my gratitude. Should he visit our Court, he will be right welcome."

De Comines bowed, and some other presentations took place; after which the nobles on either side retired, and the monarchs continued their conference.

They spoke of the Duke of Burgundy, and Edward described his last interview with the Duke, and mentioned that he had refused to become a party to the treaty.

"What shall we do, cousin, if he persists in his refusal?" asked Louis.

"Possibly he may change his tone," said Edward. "But if he continues obstinate, your Majesty must deal with him as you think fit. He will have no further aid from me."

"And what of the Duke of Bretagne?" asked Louis. "Shall I make war upon him, if he holds aloof?"

"Never with my consent, sire," rejoined Edward, somewhat sternly. "Should he be attacked, I shall be constrained to assist him with all my power. The Duke of Bretagne has proved a good and faithful ally, and in my necessities I have never found so true a friend. Therefore, I am bound to stand by him, and by Saint George, I will do so!"

A cynical smile lighted up the French King's countenance.

"I do not wonder your Majesty should feel grateful to the Duke of Bretagne," he said, in a sarcastic tone, "when I recollect that the Duke holds in his hands the last representative of the House of Lancaster, and the sole aspirant to the crown of England. As long as Henry, Earl of Richmond, is in safe keeping, your Majesty has nothing to fear."

Edward made no reply to this observation, and Louis went on.

"There is only one person left about whom

it is needful to speak," he said. "You will guess that I allude to the Constable Saint Pol. I scarcely think you will interpose in his behalf."

"Act as you will in regard to the traitor, sire," cried Edward, almost fiercely. "He has proved false to both of us, and deserves death."

"My determination is to bring him to the scaffold," said Louis; "but I am glad your Majesty approves the design."

With this, the conference ended.

After some further mutual expressions of regard, the sincerity of which may well be doubted, the two monarchs again embraced each other through the barrier, and separated.

XX.

HOW IT WAS SAID AT THE FRENCH COURT THAT SIX HUNDRED CASKS OF WINE AND A PENSION SENT KING EDWARD BACK TO ENGLAND.

BEFORE Edward quitted Picquigny, the Lord Howard, Sir John Cheney, and Isidore, who were to remain as hostages with the King of France, were sent across the river in the boat we have alluded to, and accompanied Louis to Amiens.

Apartments were assigned them in the Château de Saint Remi, and Isidore returned to his former lodgings.

In the evening Louis sent for him, and said,—

"I know you do not like to be separated from the King your master. You shall return to him to-morrow. I have only brought you here to have a little conversation with you, and make you some presents.

"I have already told your Majesty that I do not desire any presents," replied Isidore.

"But I shall be highly offended if you refuse this necklace," he added, opening a case, and displaying a magnificent collar of glittering diamonds.

"I should be sorry to offend your Majesty," replied Isidore, unable to resist the splendid gift.

"And I must also insist upon your acceptance of twelve thousand crowns. Nay, you need not hesitate. None of his Majesty's attendants are so scrupulous."

"But I suppose you expect me to do something for the money, sire?" observed Isidore, with an arch smile.

"I wish you to entertain a pleasant remembrance of the meeting at Picquigny," said Louis; "and to keep me in the King's good opinion."

"That will be very easy to do, sire."

"I am not so sure. I have many enemies. I desire to stand well with my good cousin. May I count on your good offices with him?"

"Entirely, sire."

"I was foolish enough to invite him to Paris," pursued Louis. "I did not foresee the consequences of the visit. But it is quite plain that the attractions of the place might

detain him longer than would be desirable. You yourself might be supplanted in his favour."

"I will take care he does not go to Paris, sire," rejoined Isidore.

"Enough," cried Louis. "To-morrow you shall be escorted to the English camp." Always feel certain I am your friend. If there is any favour I can grant, hesitate not to ask it. Adieu!"

Next day, the Duke of Gloucester, who had declined to be present at the meeting at Picquigny, came to Amiens, and was exceedingly well entertained by Louis, who presented him with some magnificent silver vessels and plate, together with two richly caparisoned steeds. Rich gifts were likewise bestowed on the Duke of Clarence.

So extraordinarily lavish was Louis, that not a single English noble visited him, but he received a present of some kind. The large sums of money promised to the Lord Hastings, the Lord Chancellor, the Marquis of Dorset, and others, were punctually paid. Nothing was omitted.

Isidore was escorted to the English camp by the Sire de Comines, who took with him seventy-five thousand pounds for the King.

Having received this amount, Edward forthwith raised his camp, and marched back to Calais, where he rested for a few days, and then, greatly to the satisfaction of the wily Louis, embarked with his whole army, and arrived safely at Dover.

• • • END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

BOOK III.

• THE DUKE OF CLARENCE.

I.

HOW ISIDORE INFORMED MARGARET OF ANJOU THAT HER CAPTIVITY WAS AT END, AND HOW THE ANNOUNCEMENT WAS RECEIVED.

In a gloomy chamber, in the upper story of a fortification situated in the north-east angle of the ancient wall surrounding the inner ward of the Tower of London, sat a majestic dame.

The chamber was almost circular in form, and in the stone walls, which were of enormous thickness, were three deep recesses, very wide at the entrance, but terminated by narrow grated outlets.

Communicating with this prison-lodging was a small cell, contrived in the thickness of the wall. The room was scantily furnished, and contained only an oak table, and two or three chairs of the same material.

Against the wall, near one of the recesses, was fixed a crucifix, and beneath it was a prie-dieu of the simplest fashion.

She who was confined within this prison-chamber was not more than forty-five, but she looked much older, for sorrows, such as few have known, had done their work with her. Her frame was wasted, but not bowed;

and her features, though stamped with grief, still retained traces of their former beauty. Her eye was bright, and her expression proud, showing that, despite the agonizing affliction she had endured, her spirit was unsubdued. Her gown was of dark blue velvet, then used for mourning, and her hair was covered by a white linen frontlet. This majestic dame was Margaret of Anjou, once Queen of England, widow of Henry VI, and mother of Prince Edward, ruthlessly slain at Tewksbury.

Margaret heard the door of her prison open, but believing it to be the gaoler who had come in, and being occupied with her devotions at the time, she did not raise her eyes from her missal.

When she looked up, at length, she perceived a youth of slight and graceful figure standing at a little distance from her.

It was Isidore. The royal livery in which he was clad, and which was embroidered with the badge of the House of York, displeased the Queen; but the demeanour of the young esquire was exceedingly respectful, and his looks expressed profound sympathy.

"I come from the King, gracious madame," said Isidore, with a profound obeisance. "I have just returned with my royal master from France."

"Then you can tell me how your master's ignominious retreat was conducted," rejoined Margaret, scornfully. "After all his preparations and boasting, I am told he has not fought a battle."

"He has concluded a very advantageous treaty of peace with the King of France, madame, and that is better than a victory," replied Isidore.

"Such a peace is more disgraceful than a defeat!" cried Margaret, sharply. "'Tis plain, Louis has overreached him, and I am glad of it. But I should have been better pleased if you had brought me word that Edward's host had been routed, and he himself and his brothers slain. Then I would have rewarded you with my last jewel."

"I hoped, madame, that your wrath against the King had in some degree abated," said Isidore.

"My wrath against the blood-stained usurper, whom you style King, but who has neither right nor title to the throne on which he sits, will never abate," rejoined Margaret. "Never can I pardon him who murdered my son, who ought now to be King, and who caused my husband, who *was* King, to be foully assassinated. Maledictions, such as a widow and a bereaved mother can utter in her agony, have been invoked by me on his head. Daily have I implored Heaven to avenge my wrongs. I have prayed that Edward may be cut off in his pride, and he shall be cut off! I have prayed that his race may be extinguished, and it shall be so! I have prayed that all dear to him may perish, and they shall perish miserably!"

"Oh, madame, this is too terrible!" cried Isidore, trembling and turning pale.

"What is it to thee, if they perish?" said Margaret. "Thou art nought to him—ha?"

"No, madame; but such imprecations are treasonable, and I ought not to listen to them."

"Repeat them to thy master," said Margaret, haughtily.

"No, madame," replied Isidore; "he shall hear naught from me likely to exasperate him against you. The King's feelings towards you are now kindly, and I would not change them."

"I would rather he hated me than loved me," said Margaret. "I am not so abject as to ask his pity. Fallen as I am, I know he fears me still."

"Calm yourself, I beseech you, gracious madame," said Isidore, after a pause, "and listen to me. I have said that I bring you good news."

"Is Edward on his death-bed, or hath the relentless Gloucester been slain?" demanded Margaret, sternly.

"I have come to announce to you, madame, that your captivity is at an end."

"Is this so?" said Margaret, looking steadfastly at the speaker. "Then, indeed, Edward of York is greatly changed, for I thought that naught but self-interest could move that heart of stone. How came this to pass? He hath not done it, I am well assured, of his own free will."

"King Louis hath agreed to pay a ransom of fifty thousand crowns for your liberation, madame," said Isidore.

"Then I owe nothing to Edward," cried Margaret, joyfully. "'Tis to Louis I am indebted for freedom!"

"'Tis to your august father, King René, that you owe your liberation, gracious madame," said Isidore. "To accomplish this, he has ceded Provence to Louis."

"Has the King, my father, made this great sacrifice for me?" cried Margaret. "Oh, this is too much!"

And sinking into the chair, she covered her face with her hands, and wept aloud and unrestrainedly.

These were the first tears she had shed since she beheld the body of her murdered husband borne on a bier from the Tower to be exhibited at Saint Paul's, and they greatly relieved her.

Isidore turned aside his head, unable to control his emotion.

Margaret was the first to break the silence. Scarcely conscious that she was not alone, she murmured,—

"Why has my father done this? 'Tis too much—too much! I have lost him his beautiful Provence—his Provençe that he loved so well! He has given up that sunny land, with its vines and olives, and cities near the bright blue main, that he may embrace me once more! He does not know that I have grown old—that I am no longer the fair daughter he doted on. He should have let me

die here, in this prison-chamber, and kept his dear Provence."

"You are dearer to King René than Provence, madame," said Isidore, turning round, and gazing at her with streaming eyes. "I am sure your royal father would have died of grief if he had not beheld you again."

"I thank thee for the words, gentle youth," said Margaret, much moved. "Though thou wearest the livery of my deadly enemy, thou hast a tender heart."

And she extended her hand to him. Isidore bent down, and reverently pressed it to his lips.

"I would thou hadst a better master, gentle youth," said Margaret. "I cannot ask you to go with me; nor is it likely thou wouldst share my fortunes, if I did."

"I cannot leave the King, madame," said Isidore.

"Then let me give thee one piece of counsel," said Margaret. "Make the most of thy present fortune. Assuredly, thou wilt not have Edward long."

"Oh, madame! fill me not with these dreadful forebodings, I entreat you! I should die if I lost the King."

"Die if you lost him!" exclaimed Margaret. "Let me look more narrowly at thee," she added, seizing Isidore's hand. "'Tis as I suspected. Thou art a woman! Thou art Edward's beautiful favourite, Jane Shore! Nay, deny it not. I heard thou hadst accompanied him in his expedition to France, in male attire."

"Suffer me to depart, gracious madame," said Jane. "I have no more to say."

"But I have more to say to thee," rejoined Margaret, still detaining her. "Did thy master send thee to insult me? Had I not been a prisoner, thou wouldst not have dared approach me. I would have had thee thrust from my presence."

"Madame, my desire has been to spare you pain. I deemed my disguise sufficient, and did not for a moment suppose you would recognise me."

"I recognised thee not. Thou hast betrayed thyself," said Margaret. "But thou hast learned something from me—something thou wilt not forget. My lips have pronounced thy fate. Thou art dear to Edward—very dear, it may be. Thou shalt perish miserably."

"Recall your words, gracious madame, I implore you!" cried Jane. "I have done nothing to offend you. On the contrary, my desire has been to serve you. From the bottom of my heart, I have pitied you—"

"Thou pity me!" cried Margaret, with sovereign scorn. "I would not have thy pity. Back to thy lord and master, and tell him all I have said. Bid him act as he will. He can send the mercileless Gloucester, if he desires, to slay me. I am defenceless, and a prisoner, but I have been a Queen, and I will brook no insult. Begone!"

So imperious was her tone, and so energetic her gesture, that Jane attempted no re-

monstrance; but stepped back to the barred door of the prison-chamber, and tapped against it. It was instantly opened by the gaoler, and she departed.

II.

NOW CLARENCE REVEALED HIS DESIGNS TO JANE.

On his return from the inglorious expedition to France, enriched by the large sum paid him by the wily Louis XI, Edward, always addicted to the pleasures of the table, gave himself up to ease and enjoyment.

At Windsor Castle, where he kept his Court, there was now continual feasting and revelry. Grand banquets and entertainments were of almost daily occurrence, and the luxurious monarch passed his time in a constant round of pleasure.

So indolent and enervated did he become by these habits of self-indulgence, that he neglected all hardy exercises—seldom hunted, though he had heretofore been passionately fond of the chase—and scarcely ever appeared in the tilt-yard, though he was the most expert jouster of his day.

Worse than all, he neglected public affairs, for he now disliked anything that gave him trouble, and left their management to the Queen, who displayed consummate ability in directing all matters entrusted to her care. She had now obtained a complete ascendancy over her consort, and maintained it to the last.

The only person who strove to rouse the King from the indolent state into which he had sunk was Jane, but she was unsuccessful in her efforts.

At that time, the Court was divided into two parties, strongly opposed to each other; the most powerful and the most numerous consisting of the new nobility, created by the influence of the Queen, and, consequently, devoted to her interests.

At the head of this party was her brother, Earl Rivers, whom she had contrived to marry to the richest heiress in the kingdom, and who was now governor to her son, the young Prince of Wales. Next in importance to Lord Rivers was the Marquis of Dorset, the Queen's eldest son by her first marriage, who had been recently appointed Constable of the Tower, and Keeper of the King's treasures.

Most of the old nobility had been banished from Court at the instance of the Queen, who desired their removal on account of their supposed hostility to herself; but three of her avowed enemies still enjoyed the King's favour—namely, the Duke of Buckingham, Lord High Constable; Lord Hastings, Grand Chamberlain; and Lord Stanley.

Singular to relate, the Queen manifested no jealousy whatever towards her inconstant husband's beautiful favourite, and even went so far as to conciliate her; frequent conferences taking place between them in private at the hunting lodge where Jane resided.

Edward had now been for several months

at Windsor, which might not inaptly be described as the Castle of Indolence, when the Duke of Clarence, who had absented himself from Court in consequence of some affront offered him by the Queen, suddenly re-appeared at Court.

He was unaccompanied by the Duchess, whom he had been obliged to leave at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire, on account of the feeble state of her health.

Edward welcomed him with his accustomed cordiality; but the Queen received him with marked coldness. She regarded him with distrust, having received information that he was secretly plotting against the King.

On the morning after his arrival at the Castle, the Duke paid a formal visit to Mistress Shore, who resided, as heretofore, at the hunting lodge, and was received by her with as much ceremony as if she had been queen. She was splendidly dressed, and looked surprisingly well; and Clarence really thought, as he failed not to tell her, that she quite eclipsed the most exalted lady at Court in beauty.

Jane accepted the compliment, but did not appear much gratified by it. She disliked the Duke, for she was well aware of his insincerity.

There was little resemblance, either in person or manner, between Clarence and his royal brother. Yet the Duke was very handsome, and possessed a fine figure. But his features had a sinister expression, and his manner was haughty and repelling, though not wanting in dignity. His habiliments were of the richest velvet, and his girdle and cap blazed with diamonds.

None of the haughtiness of which we have just spoken was perceptible in his deportment towards Jane. On the contrary, he was extremely deferential to her; so much so, as to excite her suspicion.

"I am sorry to hear the Duchess is unwell, my lord," she said, as she motioned him to a seat. "I trust it is only a slight indisposition."

"She is suffering from extreme debility," replied Clarence. "She has not left her couch for a month. She is under the care of Ankaret Twynhyo, a young woman of extraordinary skill, who understands her case perfectly."

"You are fortunate in having such a nurse, my lord," rejoined Jane. "Methinks you called her Ankaret Twynhyo. 'Tis a singular name. She cannot be an English woman."

"No; she is from Ghent, and was recommended to us by my sister, the Duchess of Burgundy. She is as well skilled in medicine as a physician, and I have the greatest faith in her. If anyone can save the Duchess, Ankaret can."

"I fear, from what you now say, my lord, that the Duchess must be dangerously ill," remarked Jane.

"I hope not," replied Clarence. "But she seems to lose strength daily. However, every-

thing will be done for her by Ankaret. But let us speak of the King. He does not look well, and is much changed since I saw him last. What ails him?"

"Indolence, my lord; nothing but indolence," replied Jane. "You will render him a great service if you can induce him to take more exercise."

"If you have failed, madame, who have more influence over him than anyone else, how can I hope to succeed? Perhaps," he said, with a singular smile, "a fresh insurrection might rouse him to activity. But I cannot get up one merely to effect his cure. The consequences of such a step, though beneficial to him, might be fatal to myself."

"I desire no such violent remedy, my lord," replied Jane. "But you are right. A rebellion would infallibly restore his energies."

"Unluckily there are no rebels left," observed Clarence. "All the Lancastrians are slain, except Harry of Richmond, and he is held in captivity by the Duke of Bretagne."

"I quite despair of rousing the King," remarked Jane. "All my efforts have proved fruitless."

"I do not wonder you are uneasy on his Majesty's account, madame," said Clarence. "I am told he commits too many excesses, and drinks far too much of the good wine of Chalosse sent him by Louis. If he be not checked—and who shall check him since you cannot?—most assuredly he will be seized by a sudden apoplexy."

"You alarm me, my lord!" cried Jane.

"I do not wish to alarm you, madame," pursued the Duke; "but you ought to be prepared for such an event, since it is highly probable. Consider what would then be your position?"

She looked earnestly at him, but did not speak.

"You will always have a friend in me, madame," he said, with a certain deliberation.

"And in the Queen, too, my lord!" cried Jane.

"'Twere best not to calculate too much upon her Majesty," said the Duke. "In the event of the King's sudden death—which Heaven forbid!—great confusion would ensue, and great changes take place. The two princes would be set aside. By right, the crown belongs to me. I will not disturb Edward, but I will not allow his son to succeed him."

Astonishment kept Jane silent, and the Duke went on.

"As I have intimated, Edward has no title to the crown. It can be proved that he is not the son of my father, the Duke of York. Neither is he lawfully married to her whom he styles his 'Queen.' A former wife is yet living—the Lady Eleanor Butler—to whom he was privately wedded by the Bishop of Bath, who can prove the marriage."

"You amaze me, my lord!" cried Jane.

"From what I have stated," pursued the Duke, "you will see that the children of Elizabeth Woodville cannot succeed to the throne. My title is incontestable. Behold

"this document, madame." And as he spoke, he took a parchment from his breast. "This is an authentic copy of the Act of Parliament passed when the Earl of Warwick was next heir to the crown after the male issue of Henry the Sixth. King Henry died in the Tower, as you know. Prince Edward, his only son, was slain at Tewksbury. I am Edward's successor. I ought now to be King—and, in effect, I am King. For many reasons, I shall leave my brother Edward in quiet possession. But when the throne becomes vacant—as it will be ere long—I shall occupy it; not his son!"

A brief pause ensued, after which the Duke said, "Mark me, the Act has never been repealed, and is therefore still in force. I pray you look at it, madame. Convince yourself that I have spoken the truth."

"I do not desire to look at the Act, my lord," she replied. "You must convince others of the legality of your title, not me."

"I have already done so, madame," he replied, replacing the parchment in his doublet. "All the old nobility are satisfied, and will support me. Besides, I can raise an army in the North."

"Be not too sure of that, my lord; be not too sure that the old nobility will support you," cried Jane. "'Tis possible you may not survive the King, your brother, whose youthful son you desire to supplant. Heaven may thwart your designs. Your imprudence in divulging your scheme to me may cost you your head!"

"And you intend to betray me to the King, madame?" said Clarence.

"I shall reveal all you have said to me, my lord," she rejoined. "You cannot complain. I did not invoke your confidence, and have given you no pledge of secrecy."

"Beware what you do, madame!" said Clarence, sternly. "You imagine you hold my life in your hands, but you are mistaken. I exacted no promise of secrecy from you, because I knew you would not be bound by it; but you will be silent when you learn what you have to fear. Make the revelation to Edward, and I will meet it with a counter-charge that will ruin you for ever in his esteem! Trust me, your wisest course will be to become my ally. The time will soon come when I shall be able to reward my friends, and I shall not forget those who serve me well. Several of the King's confidants are leagued with me against the Queen and her family. Her enemies must naturally be my friends."

"But I am not the Queen's enemy," said Jane.

"That will not pass with me!" exclaimed Clarence, incredulously. "Again I ask, may I count upon you as an ally?"

After a moment's reflection, Jane said, "What would you have me do?"

"Nothing that will give you trouble," he replied. "Certain matters must come to your knowledge that it may be desirable I should

know, especially when I am absent from Court."

"But how communicate them to you?" she asked.

"I have a spy in the King's household, who will convey a letter safely to me," replied the Duke.

"His name?" asked Jane.

"Baldwin," replied the Duke.

"Can he be trusted?" she asked.

"Perfectly," answered Clarence. "He is devoted to me."

"Here comes the King!" exclaimed Jane, as the door was suddenly thrown open by an usher.

"Be silent, on your life, madame!" said Clarence, in a low tone. "I am playing too deep a game not to have calculated all chances. The slightest indiscretion on your part will only precipitate matters."

Next moment, Edward entered the room, attended by his jester, Malbouche.

III.

HOW THE KING SHOOK OFF HIS LETHARGY.

PERSONALLY, Edward was not much changed; but he had an indolent and enervated appearance, that proclaimed the luxurious habits in which he indulged. He was arrayed in a robe of the richest velvet, lined with fur, and his jerkin was magnificently embroidered.

After returning the obeisances made him, he sank into a fauteuil, as if the exertion he had just undergone had been too much for him.

"Bring me a cup of wine," he said to a page, who still remained in attendance.

"If I might venture to interfere, I would advise your Majesty to refrain till dinner," said Jane.

"The walk from the Castle has made me thirsty," he replied, emptying the large silver flagon brought him by a page. "'Tis right good Gascoigne wine," he added. "Louis may have deceived me in some things; but he has sent me good wine. He has no such wine as this, I am told, at his own table."

"Louis drinks very sparingly, and mingles his wine with water," observed Jane; "and it would be well if your Majesty would follow his example."

"Nay, by my faith! that I will never do," cried Edward. "What! spoil wine like that I have just drunk, with water! That were indeed a folly, of which not even Malbouche would be guilty!"

"Nay, my liege," rejoined the jester; "I have just made a vow that I will touch no wine for three months."

"What induced thee to make a vow so foolish?" remarked Edward.

"Because I drank too much yesterday, my liege," replied Malbouche.

"For the same reason, I might make a like vow," said the King, laughing.

"'Twere well for your Majesty if you did, and kept your vow rigorously," said Jane.

"What! Would you have me forswear wine altogether?" rejoined Edward.

"I would," said Jane.

"That were a penance far too severe," observed Clarence. "When his Majesty has finished the famous Chalosse sent him by King Louis, he may think about it. My wine, by preference, is Malmsey."

"Say you so, brother?" cried Edward. "Happily, I can suit your taste. More wine!" he added to the page. "A cup of Malmsey for the Duke of Clarence."

"And for your Majesty?"

"Chalosse," replied the King. "Malmsey is too sweet for me."

Before the page went forth, Jane called him to her. Presently he returned, bearing two goblets on a salver, one of which he offered to the Duke.

"Like you the wine, brother?" inquired Edward.

"'Tis excellent?" cried Clarence. "No other wine shall pass my lips, if I can help it. My last draught shall be of Malmsey."

"I trust your wish may be gratified, brother," observed the King. "'Tis better than some vile medicinal potion. Ah! thou hast poisoned me!" he ejaculated, as he well-nigh emptied the cup. "What hast thou given me?"

"Cold water, an' please your Majesty," replied the page, scarcely able to repress a smile at the grimace made by the King.

"Nay, your Majesty must chide me," remarked Jane. "He merely obeyed my order. Finish the cup, I pray you. 'Twill clear your head for business."

"I have no business to attend to," replied the King. "The day shall be entirely devoted to amusement."

"As all your Majesty's are, and as all mine should be, were I king," remarked Malbouche.

"Will you not ride in the park?" said Jane. "The day is delightful."

"No; 'tis too hot. I am better here," said Edward, indolently. "Bring your lute, and sing to me—the while my brother Clarence and myself amuse ourselves with cards and dice."

"Ever some trifling amusement," sighed Jane, preparing to obey. "Nothing will rouse him."

Just at this moment, the door was again opened, and the Duke of Buckingham and Lord Hastings were ushered in.

"Welcome, my lords," cried Edward. "You are just in time for a game at cards. Sit down, I pray you."

"My liege," replied Buckingham, "we are sorry to interrupt you; but you must needs return with us to the Castle. A council has been hastily summoned, and your presence at it is absolutely necessary."

"Be it what it may, you must dispense with me," replied Edward. "I am not in the mood for business."

"'Tis a matter of the utmost importance, my liege," remonstrated Hastings. "The expenses of your household have largely increased, and must be provided for. No further

burden can with safety be laid upon the nation."

"Then the grants from the crown must be resumed," said Edward. "There is no other way to raise money. We have loved large sums from the clergy."

"What do I hear?" cried Clarence, starting up. "The crown grants resumed! Then I shall lose my lands. Your Majesty cannot contemplate such a step?"

"Money must be had, brother," replied Edward, calmly. "My household, as you have just heard, is expensive."

"But the expenses are not to be defrayed by me," cried Clarence, angrily. "I protest against a measure so unjust—vehemently protest against it."

"The council will listen to your objections, brother," said Edward, calmly.

"But they will be guided by your Majesty," rejoined the Duke. "Be their decision what it may, I will not part with my possessions without a struggle."

"Reserve what you have to say for the council, brother," said Edward. "Come with me. I promise you a fair hearing."

Then, rising from his seat, and instantaneously resuming all his wonted dignity of manner, he said to the two nobles,—

"My lords, I attend you."

By a powerful effort, he had completely shaken off his lethargy. His figure seemed loftier, and his countenance assumed a wholly different expression from that which it had just worn.

The transformation was so remarkable, that the beholders were struck by it, and none more so than Jane, who gazed at him with admiration.

As he turned to bid her adieu, she said to him in a low tone,—

"If I never beheld your Majesty again, I should rejoice at this blessed change!"

Edward then went forth, accompanied by the Duke of Clarence and the two nobles, and proceeded through the vineyard to the Castle.

IV.

IN WHAT MANNER THE DUCHESS OF CLARENCE WAS POISONED BY ANKARET TWYNHYO; AND OF THE FATE OF THE POISONER.

As the Duke of Clarence entered the upper ward of the Castle with the King, a messenger, who had just arrived, approached him, and presented him with a letter.

Struck by the man's looks, the Duke said to him,—

"Thou bring'st ill news, I fear?"

"My lord," replied the messenger, "when I left Ludlow Castle the Duchess had not many hours to live. Mistress Ankaret Twynhyo ordered me to convey this letter with all speed to your Grace, and I have come as swiftly as I could."

"Does Mistress Ankaret give no hopes of the Duchess's recovery?" said Clarence.

"None, my lord!" replied the messenger. "Tis scarce probable you will find her Grace alive on your return."

"I will start at once!" cried the Duke. "Heaven grant I may not arrive too late! Your Majesty has heard the sad tidings brought by this man, and will excuse my hasty departure."

"Not only excuse it, brother, but urge it," said Edward. "Leave the letter with me, that I may read what the nurse says."

"I have not yet opened the letter my liege," said Clarence, uneasily.

"No matter!" cried Edward. "There can be no secrets in it. Give it me."

And he took the letter from the Duke. To hide his confusion, Clarence hurried away, without taking formal leave of the King, or bidding adieu to the two nobles.

"I am alarming myself without cause," he thought. "Ankaret would be sure to write most guardedly. Yet she might say something that would awaken Edward's suspicions. 'Tis unlucky the letter should fall into his hands."

Thus ruminating, he mounted his steed and quitted the Castle, attended by the half-dozen retainers he had brought with him.

As soon as he was gone, the King remarked, with a singular smile, to the two nobles,—

"If the Duchess dies—and it seems she will die—Clarence will soon seek another spouse, and I foretell that his choice will fall on Mary of Burgundy. When the Duke was slain at Nanci, and his immense territories devolved on his daughter, I felt sure my greedy brother would have grasped at such a prize, had not his hand been tied. But now he is free—or will be free—there is nothing to prevent him from trying to obtain the great heiress. But he has counted without me, for I shall thwart his scheme."

Both his hearers smiled at the King's remark.

"Let us see what the letter contains," pursued Edward, opening it.

As he scanned its contents, his brow grew dark, and his looks proclaimed that he had made some startling discovery.

"Beyond doubt, this Ankaret Twynhyo is a poisoner!" he exclaimed. "Mark what she says in this letter, and judge: 'The draught wrought as expected, and as your Grace desired. For a short time, the Duchess seemed to rally, but she soon grew worse again, and is now rapidly sinking. I shall try the effect of another draught—but with little hope of saving her.' Here is a plain intimation that the poisonous draught has done its work."

"'Tis not quite plain to me, my liege," remarked Hastings. "The words may bear a different construction."

"I do not think so," cried Edward. "The woman shall be arrested and interrogated. I have no doubt whatever of her guilt. I am certain she has administered poison to the Duchess."

Thereupon, he proceeded to the council-chamber.

Early next morning, the Duke of Clarence, who had continued his rapid journey through-

out the night, came in sight of the towers of Ludlow Castle.

Picturesquely situated on the banks of the River Corvo, near its junction with the Teme, this commanding pile, which formed one of the noblest baronial residences in the kingdom, had been occupied by Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, Clarence's father; but after the battle of Wakefield, at which the Duke of York was slain, the Castle was dismantled by Henry VI, and for some time neglected.

At a subsequent period, it was bestowed by Edward on his brother Clarence, who restored it to all its pristine splendour, and placed a strong garrison within its walls. Here the ambitious and treacherous Duke planned his schemes for securing the crown.

On arriving at the Castle, Clarence's first inquiries were as to the state of the Duchess, and on learning that she still breathed, he hurried to her room.

In a carved oak bedstead, in a richly furnished chamber, lay the emaciated figure of the once beautiful Isabella, eldest daughter of the great Earl of Warwick.

A mortal pallor overspread her countenance, and the damps of death were gathering on her brow. It was evident dissolution was at hand, and that the vital spark was about to quit its earthly tabernacle.

The Duchess was speechless, and incapable of movement, but her eyes were open, and were turned towards the Duke as he entered the chamber. On her breast was laid a small crucifix, but she was unable to raise it.

Amid the deep hush of the chamber could be heard the voice of a priest, who was reciting the prayers for a departing soul.

Partly concealed by the richly embroidered curtains, stood Ankaret Twynhyo, a tall, dark-complexioned, handsome woman, of middle age.

She had a very striking countenance, owing to the peculiar expression of her large black eyes. She was plainly attired in a kirtle of dark red camlet, and wore a white coverchief.

Clarence saw her as he entered, but avoided her glance, and looked only at the Duchess, whose dying gaze was fixed upon him.

He took his wife's hand, but it was cold, and could not return his pressure. He questioned her by his looks, and she tried to respond, for she evidently knew him.

In vain! The agony came on, and the light within her eyes was extinguished.

The Duke threw himself on his knees beside the bed; and again there was a deep hush, broken only by his sobs, and by the voice of the priest.

At a later hour, the Duke was alone with Ankaret, in his cabinet. He questioned her as to the contents of the letter she had sent him.

"Has it not reached you?" she cried. "I ordered Colville to deliver it into your Grace's own hands."

"It was snatched from me by the King before I could open it," said Clarence. "Heaven

grant there was nothing in it to damage me!"

"It is unlucky the letter should fall into the King's hands," said Ankaret. "But your Grace need have no uneasiness. I wrote most carefully."

"If the King's suspicions are aroused, they are not easily allayed," said Clarence. "It may be that you have some noxious drugs, or medicines, in your possession. If so, destroy them!"

"Fear nothing, my lord," she replied. "The poisons I use are not confectioned in the ordinary manner. This small phial, which I keep concealed in my breast, was given me by an Italian, and a few drops of it are sufficient for the purpose, as you have seen. Methinks I have earned my reward."

"You have," replied Clarence, shuddering. "Here are the thousand golden crowns I promised you," he added, giving her a bag of money. "I would counsel your immediate departure, but that flight would excite suspicion."

"I will remain until after the Duchess's funeral," said Ankaret. "Till then, I will leave this money with your Grace. If search be made, so large a sum must not be found upon me."

"You are right," rejoined Clarence, as he took back the bag.

Scarcely were the words uttered, than an usher entered, and stated that an officer from the King was without, and desired to speak with the Duke.

"Is he alone?" asked Clarence, vainly endeavouring to conceal his uneasiness.

"No, my lord; he has a guard with him," replied the usher.

"Admit him!" said the Duke.

Accordingly, the officer was introduced.

Bowing respectfully to the Duke, he said,—"My duty compels me to intrude upon your Grace. I hold a warrant from his Majesty for the arrest of Ankaret Twynhyo, one of your Grace's female servants."

"On what charge?" demanded the Duke, haughtily.

"On a most serious charge!" replied the officer.

"Give it a name, sir?" cried Clarence.

"She is suspected of having poisoned the Duchess, my lord," replied the officer. "Her Grace, I am told, has just departed this life."

"But she has died from natural causes—not by poison," said the Duke. "Ankaret is totally innocent of the heinous crime imputed to her."

"I trust, my lord, she may be able to establish her innocence," rejoined the officer. "But the King believes her guilty."

"He can have no proof of her guilt," said the Duke.

"Pardon me, my lord; his Majesty has proof under her own handwriting."

"That cannot be," cried Ankaret. "I have committed no offence. I have written nothing to criminate myself."

Then throwing herself at the Duke's feet, she exclaimed, "Your Grace will not deliver me to certain destruction."

"I cannot protect you," said Clarence. "But you have nothing to fear."

"Yes; I have the torture to fear!" she replied, springing to her feet; "and I will never endure it! I will rather die here!"

And, placing the phial to her lips, she emptied its contents.

"What have you done, miserable woman?" cried the officer, astounded.

"Escaped the rack!" she replied. "Now you may take me with you, if you will. But you cannot bring me before the King. I defy you!" she added, with a fearful laugh.

"Have you naught to declare before you die, woman?" said the officer, noticing an appalling change in her countenance. "This act proves your guilt. But were you instigated to the dreadful deed?"

Clarence awaited her reply in terror, fearing she would accuse him.

"I confess that I poisoned the Duchess," she said.

"Had you an accomplice?" demanded the officer. "Answer, as you will answer to the Supreme Judge, before whom you will presently appear."

She made an effort to answer, but the quick poison had already done its work, and she fell dead into the arms of the officer.

"Saved!" mentally ejaculated Clarence.

V.

THE CHASE OF THE MILK-WHITE HART IN WARGRAVE PARK.

In those days, when so many strange and terrible events occurred, the death of the unfortunate Duchess of Clarence was soon forgotten; and though the strongest suspicion attached to the Duke, Ankaret's dying statement, as reported by the officer, served to clear him from all participation in the crime.

But the King had judged correctly. The Duchess had not been laid a month within the tomb, when Clarence, fearful of having the great prize snatched from him if he delayed longer, solicited the hand of Mary of Burgundy, and his suit being supported by the mother-in-law of the young heiress, who was likewise his own sister, and devoted to his interests, he would probably have succeeded, but for the determined opposition of Edward.

With such an accession of power as would have been afforded him by this alliance with the heiress of Burgundy, the ambitious Duke would have become far more powerful than his royal brother desired, and Edward would not therefore allow the marriage to take place.

Clarence's rage at this grievous disappointment knew no bounds, and, carried away by passion, he was indiscreet enough to threaten vengeance against the King. These menaces were reported to Edward, and the Duke's ruin was resolved upon. But a pretext must be

afforded for his destruction, and he was allowed to withdraw from Court, and retire to Ludlow Castle, where he occupied himself in planning an insurrection.

Edward was quite aware of his schemes, for he had spies in the Duke's household; but he gave himself no concern about him, and abided his time.

Among the Duke's confidants, and known to be privy to his schemes, was Sir Thomas Burdett, owner of Wargrave, a large park adjoining Windsor Forest, and well stocked with deer.

By this time, Edward, though he still feasted too frequently, had resumed his former active habits, and spent the greater part of each day in hunting, hawking, and other sports. On such occasions he was generally accompanied by Jane, who was an admirable equestrian, and, despite her slight frame, could stand a great deal of fatigue.

One day he announced his intention of hunting in Wargrave Park, and set out betimes from Windsor, as the place was somewhat distant. He was accompanied by a large and splendid party, among whom were the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Hastings, and other nobles; but no other lady was with him, except Jane.

Edward seemed rather preoccupied as he rode through the forest, and it is certain, he was not thinking wholly of the chase; but whatever grave matter engrossed his thoughts, he did not mention it to Jane, though he now and then exchanged a serious word with Buckingham and Hastings.

Sir Thomas Burdett, in whose park he was about to hunt, was a man of fierce and ungovernable temper, and had been engaged in many private quarrels. He had fought at the battle of Barnet, under the Earl of Warwick; but his estates were saved from confiscation by Clarence, to whom he owed a large debt of gratitude, and was anxious to repay it.

Wargrave Park, as already intimated, was well stocked with deer, and Sir Thomas being a great hunter, cared not how many stags he killed—the more the merrier; but, amid the herds, there was a milk-white hart that he loved, and would never allow to be chased.

So tame was the beautiful animal, that it would come to feed out of Sir Thomas's hand, and was generally seen beneath the oaks in front of the mansion.

As a safeguard, and to show that it belonged to him, he hung a chain of gold round its neck, and the hart seemed proud of the decoration.

This gentle creature, never hitherto disturbed by hunters, Edward resolved to kill, his object being to excite the anger of its owner. Had Jane been aware of the King's design, she would have striven to dissuade him from it, and would certainly not have aided him.

Edward entered Wargrave Park, Thomas Burdett, wholly unsuspecting of purpose, came forth, and placed all his

deer at his Majesty's disposition, promising him excellent sport.

"You have a milk-white hart, I understand, Sir Thomas?" remarked Edward.

The knight replied in the affirmative, and pointed out the animal beneath the trees.

Thereupon, the King rode with Jane towards the spot, followed by the huntmen and hounds. Long before their approach, the whole herd took to flight, except the gentle hart, which lifted up its noble head, and looked at them unconcernedly.

"Oh! how much I should like to have that lovely creature!" cried Jane. "But Sir Thomas will never consent to part with it."

"He must part with it!" remarked Edward, significantly.

"Ah! here it comes!" exclaimed Jane, as the stag tripped forward to meet them.

But as it got within half a bowshot of the party, it stopped. Something had alarmed it.

After gazing for a moment, as she thought, wistfully, at Jane, the stag dashed off.

At a sign from the King, the horns were blown, and the hounds unleashed, and the whole party started in pursuit.

Unable to restrain her steed, Jane was obliged to keep near the King.

"You do not mean to kill that stag, my liege?" she cried. "Twere a cruel deed!"

Edward made no reply, but his looks proclaimed that such was his intent.

Jane rode on, occasionally renewing her entreaties, but the King continued obdurate.

Never before had such a chase been seen, either in Wargrave Park or Windsor Forest, and those who witnessed it were wonderstruck at the swiftness of the beautiful stag, as it speeded along the glades, and passed through the groves.

Jane thought it would escape, but on reaching the limits of the park, it turned, and, after rapidly retracing its course, made for the mansion, hoping to find refuge with its master.

But before the terrified animal could reach this place of safety, it was pulled down by the hounds, and killed by Edward's own hand.

Taking the chain from the hart's neck, the King gave it to Jane, and bade her wear it.

"I like not the gift, my liege," she said, perceiving that the chain was sprinkled with blood. "I fear it will bring me ill luck."

"Nay, by my faith, you shall wear it," said Edward. "It will remind you of this merry chase."

Placing the bugle to his lips, he winded a mort.

Next moment, the whole party came up, and gathered round the slaughtered stag.

At the same time Sir Thomas Burdett reached the spot, almost distraught with grief and rage.

Looking down at the poor beast, he exclaimed, in the bitterness of his heart,—

"Must thou be the victim of his savage sport? Would that thy horns were plunged deep in his body who slew thee!"

Scarcely had the imprudent words escaped him, than he was seized by a couple of huntsmen.

"Ha, traitor! ha, villain!" exclaimed Edward, furiously. "Thy tongue ought to be plucked out for those treasonable words!"

"Pardon him, I implore you, my liege," in terposed Jane. "Ask grace of the King, Sir Thomas," she added to the knight, "and he will grant it to you."

"Let him take my life, if he will," rejoined Burdett, sternly. "I doubt not he seeks it, or he would not have done me this grievous wrong."

"Peace, sir," said Jane. "You aggravate your offence. Humble yourself, and I will intercede for you."

"I want not your intercession. I would not owe my life to you" cried Sir Thomas, scornfully.

"Thou art a vile traitor, and shalt die!" cried Edward, as he sprang into the saddle.

"I go to my doom," said Burdett. "But mark me, sire! This deed will not be unavenged!"

"Ha! say'st thou?" cried Edward, hoping to draw something further from him. "Who will avenge thee?"

"Heaven!" replied the knight. "Heaven will avenge me!"

Then, turning to the men who held him, he said,—

"A moment, and I will go with you."

And as they released him, he knelt down beside the hart, and patted its forehead gently, muttering the while,—

"They have killed thee, my poor beast, that they might kill thy master!"

After taking this farewell of his favourite, which moved Jane greatly, if it moved no one else, he arose, and delivered himself to his captors.

Meantime, the King had given orders that he should be taken to his own house, being strictly guarded the while, and then brought as a prisoner to Windsor Castle.

Thus ended the chase of the milk-white hart in Wargrave Park; and it was long afterwards remembered, because divers calamities were traced to it.

As Jane rode back through the forest, she was much dispirited, and Edward vainly endeavoured to cheer her.

That night she dreamed that the chase was renewed, but it ended differently. Hotly pursued, the hart stood at bay, and gored the King dangerously with its horns.

As to the unhappy knight, he was first taken to Windsor Castle, as had been enjoined, and was then arraigned before the judges, charged with high treason, condemned to death, and executed within two days.

VI.

OF THE QUARREL BETWEEN THE KING AND CLARENCE, AND HOW THE DUKE WAS ARRESTED.

The Duke of Clarence was at Ludlow Castle when this tragical event occurred, and so in-

censed was he when he heard the particulars of his adherent's execution, that he set out at once for Windsor to demand an explanation of the King.

Nor had his anger abated by the time of his arrival at the Castle. He sought an immediate audience of the King, and obtained it.

Edward was alone in his cabinet, when Clarence was ushered into his presence. Perceiving at once, from his brother's looks and deportment, that he was scarcely able to control himself, he resolved to take advantage of any indiscretion on the Duke's part.

"Your Majesty will not doubt what has brought me hither," said Clarence, in a haughty tone. "I have come to demand from you an account of the death of my faithful adherent, Sir Thomas Burdett?"

"Tis plain you have not heard what has happened, brother," replied the King. "Your adherent has been found guilty of high treason."

"And has been put to death, because he uttered a few hasty words when you killed his favourite deer!" said Clarence. "No tyrant could have acted with greater severity!"

"It may be well you should put some guard on your own speech, brother," rejoined Edward, sternly. "Sir Thomas Burdett was justly executed. 'Twas proved at his trial, by his servants, that he practised magic arts—that he fashioned small leaden images of ourself and the princes, our sons, and melted them, praying we might consume in like manner; and that he calculated our nativity, predicting death on a certain day. For these practices—not altogether for his treasonable speech—was he condemned to die."

"I do not believe in these idle charges," cried Clarence. "The servants who accused him of sorcery were suborned. Sir Thomas was loyal and true."

"In vowing fidelity to you, brother, he did not reserve his allegiance to me," rejoined Edward.

"The accusations are false, I repeat," cried Clarence. "His trial was a mere mockery, for his destruction was resolved upon. This is shown by the haste with which the affair was conducted."

"Dare you say this to me?" cried Edward.

"Ay; and I dare tell you that you have acted unwisely as well as unjustly in this hasty procedure, and that you may have reason to regret what you have done."

"You threaten, methinks, brother!" remarked the King.

"This deadly blow has been aimed against me," said Clarence, giving way to ungovernable passion. "These false charges have been brought against Burdett in order that they may prejudice me, but I repel them with scorn and indignation. Is this your gratitude? To me you owe your re-establishment on the throne, when you had been driven from it. Had I not aided you, Warwick would inevitably have proved the victor at Barnet."

"You forget that I should never have had to fight for my kingdom but for your treachery and desertion," rejoined Edward. "In pardoning the rebellion for which you ought to have lost your head, I did enough. But I have bestowed favours without end upon you."

"You have latterly deprived me of half my possessions by the intolerable act of resumption," said Clarence. "Moreover, you have thwarted my marriage with Mary of Burgundy, which the Duchess, our sister, had fully arranged. Think you I will tamely submit to such a wrong?"

"I know not—and care not," rejoined Edward, in a tone of indifference.

"I am treated as if I have no title to the crown," cried Clarence; "whereas, my title is superior to your own. There cannot be a doubt that the Duke of York was my father."

"What would you insinuate?" said Edward, fiercely.

"Methinks the inference is sufficiently clear," said Clarence.

"Retract what thou hast said, or, by Saint Mark, I will strike thee dead at my feet," cried Edward, starting up and drawing his dagger.

Clarence did not blench, but prepared to defend himself.

What might have been the end of this unnatural quarrel, it boots not to consider, but fortunately at this moment Jane entered the cabinet, and, seeing how matters stood, she rushed forward and placed herself between them.

"Hold, my liege!" she exclaimed. "Forget not that the Duke of Clarence is your brother!"

"He has dared to defame his own mother, and merits death at my hand!" said Edward. "But I will not sully my steel with his blood. I will leave him to the executioner."

And he sheathed his dagger.

"The Duke cannot mean what he has said, my liege," cried Jane. "He has spoken in anger. Let him depart, I pray you!"

"No," replied Edward. "He stirs not hence, save to the Tower. I have forgiven him many injuries; but it would be worse than weakness to forgive him now. His anger has caused him to betray the project he has formed. 'Tis no less than to disinherit me and my issue."

"Since you have discovered the design, my liege, 'tis innocuous," said Jane. "Clanency may excite better feelings in his breast. Throw yourself at the King's feet, my lord, and, perchance, he may vouchsafe you a pardon."

"Never!" cried Clarence. "Let him take my life, if he will, I have been goaded to madness by great wrongs, and no wonder I have become desperate."

"You hear, my liege," cried Jane. "His Highness owns he has been in fault."

"If he sincerely repents, and promises not to offend again, I may be induced to forgive

him," said Edward, somewhat mollified. "But let him bend his proud neck."

"Ask not too much, my liege," implored Jane. "Suffer him to depart."

"Bid him return forthwith," said Edward, "and shut himself up in Ludlow Castle, till I grant him liberty. Any infraction of my orders will be visited with death."

"I need not repeat his Majesty's commands to your Highness," said Jane. "But I would exhort you to make all haste you can to Ludlow Castle."

"I will take refuge there as in a sanctuary," said Clarence.

"But you will find it no sanctuary if you again offend, brother," said Edward, sternly.

"Fare you well!"

Clarence made no response; but, with a haughty reverence, departed.

For some time after he was gone, Edward maintained a moody silence, and Jane did not venture to address him. At length he spoke.

"Clarence's nature is wholly faithless," he said. "To me he has always been false, and he was equally false to Warwick. He will now commence fresh plots against me."

"Let us hope not, my liege," said Jane. "At all events, I am glad you pardoned him."

"I have only pardoned him conditionally," rejoined the King.

Shortly afterwards, Lord Hastings entered the cabinet, looking very much disturbed.

"I have been sorely tempted to disobey your Majesty's commands, and detain the Duke of Clarence," he said. "We have abundant proofs that he has been conspiring against you, and if not checked, he is certain to breed confusion, and perhaps cause another insurrection."

"Such is my own opinion," said Edward. "But Mistress Shore has pleaded for him, and I have yielded to her entreaties."

"He is so actively mischievous, that he ought not to be at large, my liege," said Hastings.

"I have ordered him to return at once to Ludlow Castle, and keep close there," rejoined Edward.

"But you neglected to send a guard with him, my liege," said Hastings. "He has gone to Shene."

"To Shene!" cried Edward. "Follow him thither at once with a dozen men-at-arms. Arrest him, and clap him in the Tower. There he will be quiet, and may plot at his ease, without danger to me."

"My liege!" cried Jane.

"You see in vain," rejoined Edward. "I am deaf to your entreaties. About the business at once, my lord!"

"Give me this warrant for the Duke's arrest, my liege," said Hastings, "and he shall be lodged within the Tower before night."

This was done, and Hastings set out at once for Shene Palace, where he found the Duke, and arrested him.

VII.

HOW CLARENCE WAS IMPRISONED IN THE
BOWYER'S TOWER.

CLARENCE manifested great displeasure at what he termed the King's violation of faith, but he did not offer any resistance, and, his attendants being dismissed, he was conveyed, by water, to the Tower, and placed in a prison-lodging at the rear of the donjon.

The fortification wherein the Duke of Clarence was confined, and which, from this circumstance, has acquired a peculiarly gloomy celebrity, is situated in an angle at the north of the ancient wall surrounding the inner ward.

The structure is of great strength, and originally consisted of two stories, approached by a circular stone staircase. The basement floor, in which the Duke was confined, and which exactly corresponded with the upper room, now demolished, was vaulted and groined, and contained three deep recesses, contrived in the thickness of the walls, and each terminated by a narrow, grated embrasure. Near the ponderous door there was a small cell, likewise formed in the substance of the wall.

The fortification derived its name, as will be readily conjectured, from having been originally the residence of the master-bowyer, one of the officers of the Tower; but even at the date of our story, it had long been used as a place of confinement for state prisoners.

In this gloomy prison the ambitious and luxurious Clarence was left to fret.

For a short time he persuaded himself that his royal brother, whom he had so deeply injured, but who had so often forgiven him, would relent and set him free. But his expectation vanished as he reflected upon what he had done, and he blamed his own imprudence. He well knew he had a bitter enemy in the Queen, and that she would harden the King's heart against him. Besides, he had many other powerful enemies bent upon his destruction, while his friends were unable to serve him.

He could think of no other person who would act as a mediator between him and the King except Jane, and hearing she was at Westminster, he contrived to send a message to her. But before she could respond to his appeal, he had a visit from his brother, the Duke of Gloucester, which entirely altered his frame of mind.

Unaware that the deeply dissembling Gloucester secretly aspired to the throne, and, consequently, desired the removal of every obstacle in his way, Clarence confided in him, and when he visited him in his prison, laid bare his secret heart to him.

"Tis certain I have deeply offended the King, our brother, by seeking to disinherit him and his children," he said; "but I do not despair of obtaining a pardon, through the instrumentality of Mistress Shore."

"Do not apply to her, brother," rejoined the wily Gloucester. "Mistress Shore will do you

more harm than good. That she will undertake your cause I nothing doubt. But her previous interference in your behalf displeased the King, and if she troubles him again, all my exertions will be ineffectual. I hope to find a better advocate for you than Mistress Shore."

"Impossible! She has far more influence with Edward than anyone else, and can counteract the Queen's animosity, which I have most reason to dread."

"What if I secure the Queen herself, brother?" said Gloucester. "Already I have spoken with her Majesty, who shows a kindly disposition towards you. Upon that feeling I will work till I have enlisted her sympathies in your behalf, and then you are safe, for the King will not refuse her if she solicits your pardon. But if Mistress Shore steps in beforehand, and torments Edward with importunities, even the Queen will fail."

"I should have thought the Queen more likely to inflame Edward against me than to pacify him."

"You have to thank me for this favourable change in her sentiments," said Gloucester. "But the utmost caution must be observed, or her enmity may again be aroused. Have nought to do with Mistress Shore, brother—that is my counsel."

But I have besought Mistress Shore to come to me," said Clarence.

"Tis well you told me this, or you had spoiled all," said Gloucester. "Forbid her to speak to the King—peremptorily forbid her! Heed not giving the minion offence. Dismiss her!"

"By so doing, I shall make her my enemy."

"No matter. You must choose between her and the Queen. But I must now leave you."

"Your discourse has cheered me greatly, brother," said Clarence. "Come again soon, I pray you."

I must not come too often," replied Gloucester. "But I have brought you something that will cheer you better than my society. Something to gladden your heart, brother."

"What is it? A book? A lute?" cried Clarence.

Just then, a noise was heard outside.

"Someone comes," cried Gloucester. "It may be Mistress Shore. I would not meet her. You shall hear from me ere long. Farewell!"

But before he could depart, the door was opened by Dighton, the gaoler, and Jane entered the room, attended by Malbouche.

Bowing haughtily to her, Gloucester was about to pass forth, when the jester said to him—

"I expected to find your Highness here."

"How art knave?" cried the Duke, surprised.

"Because I fancied you would like to change places with the Duke, your brother," replied Malbouche, with a grin.

"Go to," cried Gloucester. "Thou art a meddling fool!" And he quitted the chamber in some confusion.



MARGARET OF ANJOU RECEIVES HER VISITOR. (See page 68.)

VIII.

HOW A BUTT OF MALMSEY WAS SENT TO CLARENCE BY THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER.

"I THANK you, madame, for this kindly visit," said Clarence. "Your sympathy for the unfortunate proves the goodness of your heart."

"I fear I can render you little assistance, my lord," said Jane. "The King still continues violently incensed. 'Tis in vain I endeavour to exculpate you. He will not listen to me. Your enemies are too powerful."

"One of the worst has just gone forth," remarked Malbouche.

"My brother! The Duke of Gloucester! I cannot believe it," cried Clarence.

"'Tis true," said the jester. "He is leagued with the Queen against your Highness."

"Thou art mistaken," exclaimed the Duke. "He asserted, even now, that the Queen is friendly to me."

"Alas! my lord, it is not so," said Jane. "I fear you have but one friend to plead your cause with the King."

"And Gloucester would have me alien at that friend!" cried Clarence. "Oh, madame, how much I owe you! Without you I were lost."

"I will save you, my lord, if I can," said Jane. "I will beg your life on my knelt knees. But I dare not promise that my prayer will be granted."

"Yes, yes; it will!" cried Clarence, eagerly. "The King can refuse you nothing. If he spares me, he may rely on my fidelity and devotion for the future. No more plots, no more insurrections. Let him take back all my possessions. I shall be content with bare life."

"Should your Highness be pardoned, as I trust you may be," said Jane, "I am well assured the King will act generously. Your possessions will not be forfeited."

"You give me some hopes, then?" cried Clarence.

"If your enemies prove not too powerful, my lord, I trust I shall prevail," said Jane.

Here an interruption was offered by the entrance of Sir Robert Brackenbury, the lieutenant of the Tower.

"His Grace the Duke of Gloucester hath sent your Highness a butt of the choicest malmsey," said Brackenbury. "The men are now bringing it hither."

"I am half inclined to return the gift," cried the Duke.

"Nay, my lord, I pray you do not," said the Lieutenant. "You will offend his Grace, and, moreover, the wine will cheer you, and enable you to bear your confinement. Ha! here it comes."

And as he spoke, a huge cask was pushed into the room—not without some difficulty—by three stout porters.

"'Twill incommode your Highness if it stand here!" said Brackenbury. "Place it in yonder recess," he added, to the porters.

And the men, having fulfilled their task, departed.

"Your Highness can now drown your cares!" cried Malbouche, as he gazed at the butt, which completely blocked up the embrasure.

"I can drown myself whenever I am so minded!" rejoined Clarence.

The hint did not seem lost on Brackenbury, to judge from the singular expression of his countenance.

"Will it please your Highness to taste the wine?" he added. "If so, I will have the cask broached forthwith."

"Not now, Sir Robert," rejoined Clarence.

"Behrew me, if I would drink a drop of it," said Malbouche.

"If your Highness has any fear, I will not as your taster," observed Brackenbury.

"Thank you, good Sir Robert," said Clarence. "If I thought the wine would procure me oblivion, I would drink deeply of it."

"Avoid it, my lord, if you are wise," remarked Jane, in a low, significant tone.

Then, turning to the Lieutenant, she added, "I will pray you conduct me to the gate, Sir Robert."

Brackenbury bowed in assent, and immediately afterwards the party quitted the prison, and Clarence was left alone to his reflections.

IX.

HOW CLARENCE WAS TRIED FOR HIGH TREASON AND CONDEMNED TO DEATH.

WITHIN a week from this date, Clarence was placed at the bar of the House of Lords, charged with high treason, the Duke of Buckingham being appointed high steward for the occasion.

The prosecution being conducted by the King in person, it was evident from the first that the prisoner would be found guilty. So overpowered, indeed, were the nobles by Edward's vehemence and passion, that not a single voice was raised in the Duke's favour.

Yet Clarence defended himself courageously and well, and produced a strong impression upon his auditors. Energetically denying the accusations brought against him by the King, he denounced the Queen and the Duke of Gloucester as his mortal enemies, and the secret contrivers of this scheme for his destruction.

His defence, however, as had been foreseen, proved unavailing, and when he gazed around at the noble assemblage at the close of his eloquent address, all looks were averted from him. He was found guilty, condemned to death, and sentence pronounced upon him by the Duke of Buckingham.

But Edward objected to a public execution, and it was thought, from the reluctance thus manifested by the King, that he would pardon his unfortunate brother.

Perhaps the Duke himself entertained some such expectation. The firmness he had displayed throughout the trial never deserted him, and he heard his sentence with composure.

With a haughty step he marched from Westminster Hall to the barge that was waiting to convey him back to the Tower, and was wholly unmoved by the cries of the populace.

But when he was alone in his prison-chamber in the Bowyer's Tower, his courage deserted him. He then felt how vain it was to struggle against his enemies.

Not one of those whom he had favoured, and helped to raise to greatness, had spoken in arrest of judgment—not one would plead for him—while some, he felt sure, would harden the King's heart against him.

His sole hope rested upon Jane. If anyone could save him, she could. Convinced of this, he sent for Sir Robert Brackenbury, who, he thought, had a friendly feeling towards him, and besought him to despatch a messenger to her with a letter which he had prepared, and the Lieutenant complied with the request.

Instead of writing an answer, Jane came in person, accompanied, as before, by Malbouche. The expression of her countenance was calculated to revive the Duke's hopes. Brackenbury was present at the interview.

"I had not waited for your letter, my lord," she said, "to implore a remission of your sentence from the King, and I trust your life will be spared. You will be banished for a time to Ireland—"

"That is nothing!" cried Clarence, joyfully. "I can endure a long exile with patience, but I cannot meet death, with the fortitude I expected. Oh, how much I owe you, madame!"

"I deem it right to inform your Highness," said Jane, "that the Duke of Gloucester has been striving to obtain a warrant for your secret execution; but I do not think, after my representations to his Majesty, that he will succeed."

"Heaven confound the fratricide and murderer! He is worse than Cain!" exclaimed Clarence, furiously. "He seeks to slay me, that he may mount the throne himself. Is it possible Edward does not perceive his aim?"

"His Majesty can only see one thing at a time, your Highness," remarked Malbouche.

"He will find out his mistake when it is too late," said Clarence. "The Queen, too, will regret her misplaced confidence in the dissembling villain."

"Send back his butt of malmsey, my lord," said Malbouche. "'Tis still here, I see."

"Ay, and the sight of it disturbs me!" cried Clarence. "I have not tasted, nor will I taste, the contents of the cask. Take it hence, I pray you, Sir Robert?"

"Heed not this fool's advice, my lord!" said Brackenbury. "You will be glad of the wine anon."

"'Tis no fool's advice, as his Highness will find," said the jester.

"Well, to-morrow the cask shall be removed, if his Highness desires it," rejoined Brackenbury.

"To-morrow!" ejaculated Malbouche. "Who knows what may happen before to-morrow?"

"Dost think the butt will be emptied, knave?" said the Lieutenant.

"I know not what to think," rejoined the jester. "But strange qualms come o'er me when I look at it."

"I must now take leave of your Highness," said Jane. "I shall continue to watch over your safety."

"I like not to say farewell for ever, madame," rejoined the Duke, in a despondent tone. "But have a foreboding we shall never meet again in this world."

"Dismiss the thought," said Jane. "Your enemies shall not triumph over you if I can prevent them."

"Beware of yonder cask," said Malbouche. "That 's my parting counsel to your Highness."

Jane and the others then went forth, and the Duke was once more left to his melancholy reflections.

Before Jane and the Lieutenant reached the Tower stairs, near which the barge was moored, they encountered Sir William Catesby, the Duke of Gloucester's chief confidant.

He had just landed from a covered boat, and was accompanied by two stalwart but repulsive-looking attendants.

To Jane, Catesby's appearance at this juncture seemed ominous of ill; and Brackenbury's countenance grew sombre as he noticed his ill-omened attendants. Malbouche absolutely shuddered at the sight of them.

"Have you any business with me, Sir William?" inquired the Lieutenant, as Catesby came up.

"Very important business, Sir Robert," replied the other, in accents distinctly heard by Jane and her companion. "I bring you a warrant for the immediate execution of the Duke of Clarence. 'Tis the King's pleasure that the execution be done in secret. More anon."

With this, he delivered the warrant to Brackenbury, who bowed as he received it.

At the same moment, an irrepressible cry from Jane attracted the attention of Catesby's sinister attendants, and they both turned their sullen faces towards her.

X.

SHOWING IN WHAT MANNER THE DUKE OF CLARENCE WAS PUT TO DEATH.

"THOUGH I have a warrant for this secret execution, I like it not," remarked Brackenbury, as he stood with Catesby near the entrance to the Lieutenant's lodgings. "It savours of a murder, and I would rather have no hand in it."

"It must appear that the Duke has died a natural death," rejoined Catesby. "Miles Forrest and Swartmoor, the two men I have brought with me, will do the deed well, and give you no trouble. But since you dislike the business, leave it to me. Give me the keys of the Bowyer's Tower, and order the gaoler not to go there till to-morrow morning."

"Right glad am I to be relieved of a duty

so unpleasant," said Brackenbury. "For a mountain of gold I would not have such a crime upon my conscience. If I understand aright, the Duke is allowed to choose the manner of his death?"

"Even so," replied Catesby. "But me thinks 'twere best not to give him the choice. I have my own idea of an easy end, and that I shall now put in practice."

"Would that the matter could be delayed!" exclaimed the compassionate Lieutenant.

"That were impolitic. When Louis was consulted by our own King about the imprisonment of the Duke of Clarence, the shrewd French monarch replied, in a verse from Lucan,—

'Tolle moras, semper nocuit differe paratis.'

Delay not when you are ready to act. That is my own maxim."

"But the Duke is unprepared," said Brackenbury. "He must not be cut off in his sin. I will take his confessor, Father Lambert, to him."

"I object not to the confessor," rejoined Catesby; "but my plan must not be marred."

"Tell me naught of your plan, and then I cannot interfere with it," said the Lieutenant.

"Enter my lodgings, I pray you, and take Forrest and Swartmoor with you. 'Twere best they should not be seen about. On my return, you shall have the keys of the prison, and all else you may require."

"No need of haste," rejoined Catesby. "Nothing will be done before midnight."

"The deed befits the hour," observed Brackenbury.

He then proceeded towards St. Peter's Chapel in quest of Father Lambert, while Catesby called to his men, and took them into the Lieutenant's lodgings.

Clarence was pacing to and fro within his prison-chamber, in a very agitated state of mind, when the door was unlocked, and Brackenbury entered with Father Lambert, who was well-known to the Duke, and, indeed, acted as his confessor.

Extending his arms over the illustrious prisoner, who bent reverently before him, Father Lambert exclaimed,—

"The saints be with you, my son."

Then, regarding him earnestly, he added, "I trust I find you resigned to Heaven's holy will."

"My sufferings are severe, father," replied the Duke; "but, I strive to bear them patiently. I thank you for this visit. Your exhortations will greatly comfort me."

"My son," said Father Lambert, solemnly, "I have come to help you to prepare for death."

"Is it so near at hand?" demanded Clarence, reading in the Lieutenant's looks a confirmation of the dread announcement.

"Alas! my lord, I can give you no hope," said Brackenbury. "The King is inexorable. Your enemies have prevailed!"

"But when am I to die, and how?" cried

Clarence. "How many hours are left me? Shall I behold another day?"

"My lord, I cannot answer the questions you put to me," rejoined Brackenbury. "'Tis certain you have not long to live. 'Twere best, therefore, to employ the little time remaining to you in preparation for eternity. To that end, I will leave Father Lambert with you. He will tarry as long as you list, and I promise you shall not be interrupted. May our Blessed Lord absolve you of all your sins!"

He then went forth, leaving the Duke alone with the priest.

The Duke had much to confess, for nearly three hours had elapsed ere Father Lambert rejoined the Lieutenant, who was waiting for him at the foot of the stone staircase.

"How left you his Highness, holy father?" inquired Brackenbury, in a tone of deep solicitude.

"Truly and heartily contrite," replied the priest. "I have given him full absolution."

Greatly comforted by the prayers and exhortations of his ghostly counsellor, Clarence became more composed.

When night came on, he did not seek his couch, but while seated in a chair, sank into a profound slumber, from which he was aroused by the opening of the door.

The foremost of those who entered bore a lamp, that served to dispel the gloom, and showed him three persons, whose appearance filled him with dismay.

Springing to his feet, he stood gazing at them in speechless terror. Their proceedings surprised him. He who bore the lamp set it down, while his ruffianly attendants placed a flagon and some silver goblets they had brought with them on a little oak table that stood in the centre of the room.

"Is it thou, Catesby?" demanded the Duke, at length. "What brings thee here at this untimely hour?"

"I am come to have a carouse with your Highness," replied the other.

"Thou mockest me! Knowest thou not I am condemned to death?"

"'Tis in the hope of cheering your last moments that I have thus intruded upon your Highness," rejoined Catesby. "I have been informed by his Grace of Gloucester that your Highness is well supplied with wine. Nay, by the mass! I desecrate a butt of malmsey in yonder recess. We shall scarce finish it at a sitting; but let us make the attempt!"

"No more wine shall pass my lips," said the Duke; "but drink as much as you will, and let your men help you!"

"I thank your Highness for the offer," rejoined Catesby. "Knock off the lid of the cask, and fill the flagon," he added to his attendants.

As the order was obeyed, the powerful odour of the wine pervaded the chamber, and slightly assailed the Duke's brain.

Filling a goblet to the brim, Catesby emptied it at a draught.

"By the mass! 'tis a rare wine!" he cried.

"His Highness said you might taste it," he added, filling a cup for each of his attendants.

"By Saint Dominick, I never drank such wine!" cried Miles Forrest. "It gladdens the heart."

"A cup of it would revive me were I at the last gasp!" exclaimed Swartmoor.

"You hear what they say, my lord?" cried Catesby, filling another goblet. "By Heaven! 'tis the true *elixir vite*!—a sovereign remedy against earthly ills."

"Ay, that I'll warrant it!" cried Miles Forrest. "Would my cup might be replenished!"

"And mine!" cried Swartmoor.

"Stint them not, I command you!" said the Duke to Catesby. "Since the wine pleases you, my good fellows, drink of it lustily."

"We should enjoy it far more an' your Highness would bear us company," said Miles Forrest.

"Ay, marry, should we!" cried Swartmoor.

"Better wine was never drunk," that I maintain!" cried Catesby. "Were I to yield to my own inclinations, I should half empty yon cask."

"And we could empty the other half," said his attendants laughing.

"Set about the task," cried Clarence.

"But your Highness must help us," said Catesby.

"I am prevented by a promise given to Father Lambert," replied Clarence. "When the wine was brought here, the good priest cautioned me against it, declaring that a draught of it would be fatal to me, and I promised not to touch it."

"The wine cannot be wholesome to us, and noxious to others," said Catesby. "But, be it what it may, I am resolved your Highness shall taste it."

"You will not dare to use force, sir?" cried Clarence, alarmed by his tone and manner, as well as by the altered deportment of the two ruffians. "I will resist to the death!"

"Resistance will be idle, my lord," said Catesby. "Take him to the cask," he added to his myrmidons. "If he will not drink, plunge his head into the wine!"

"Off, villains!" cried Clarence, as they approached. "I guess your design. You would drown me."

They replied by a dreadful laugh, and seizing the Duke, a terrible struggle commenced.

As they dragged him away, despite his desperate efforts to free himself, the table was upset, and the flagon and goblets rolled to the ground, with a hideous clatter.

Catesby did not stay to see the dreadful deed done. Snatching up the lamp, he rushed from the room, and stationed himself outside the door.

While standing there, he heard a terrible splash, followed by half-stifled cries, mingled with imprecations from the murderers. Then all became silent.

Only for a few minutes.

A dreadful sound was next heard of a heavy body thrown on the floor.

Catesby waited no longer.

On re-entering the room, he saw an inert mass lying on the ground.

Beside it stood the two murderers.

The floor was flooded with wine. Wine, also, was streaming from the long locks of the victim, and from the upper part of his rich habiliments, showing how his death had been accomplished.

Next day, it was rumoured throughout London that the Duke of Clarence had died suddenly during the night in his prison-chamber in the Tower; and the circumstance seemed so suspicious, that loud murmurs of indignation were everywhere heard.

To allay the popular excitement, the body was exposed at Saint Paul's that all might behold it. But no one was imposed upon by the exhibition, and the general opinion remained the same—that the Duke had not come fairly by his end.

Within the fortress, these doubts were speedily converted into certainty; for the unheard-of manner of the illustrious prisoner's death could not be concealed from the gaolers.

Thenceforth, a superstitious horror brooded over the Bowyer's Tower. Always gloomy, it was now supposed to be haunted. Strange sounds were heard at dead of night in the chamber wherein the ill-fated Clarence had met his mysterious death, and the hapless prisoners who succeeded him were scared almost out of their senses by fearful sights and sounds.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

BOOK IV.

EDWARD THE FOURTH.

I.

HOW CAXTON PRESENTED A PSALTER TO
THE KING.

DEEPLY, but unavailingly, did Edward reproach himself that he had not pardoned his unhappy brother. Perhaps, if Jane had seen the King after the meeting on the wharf with Catesby and the murderers, whose dark design she suspected, her prayers might have prevailed; but, owing to Gloucester's management, she could not obtain access to his Majesty till all was over, and Edward had a weight upon his soul that could not be removed. His brother's blood seemed to cry out for vengeance against him, and he trembled lest the dark offence of which he had been guilty should be visited upon his children.

Only three months previously he had created Edward, his eldest son, still quite a boy, Prince of Wales, and Richard, the youngest, Duke of York. What if both should be taken from him, and his line cut off? He confessed he had provoked Heaven's wrath, and that the punishment would not be greater than he deserved.

To stifle his remorse, he again began to indulge in the excesses that had heretofore proved so baneful to him. But self-indulgence did not lighten his mental anguish, while it increased the bodily infirmities that had stolen upon him of late. His temper became uncertain, and he frequently gave way to violent fits of passion.

This change in his habits, though regarded with much concern by those who loved him, was highly satisfactory to the darkly-designing Gloucester, as it held forth the promise that the life of the royal voluptuary would not be long.

But another passion, besides luxury, had taken possession of the King, from which he had hitherto been wholly free. Owing to the sums extorted from his subjects under various pretexts, the estates he had confiscated, and the large annual pension he received from Louis XI., he became very rich, and as his treasures increased, he grew covetous.

Hitherto lavish, if not generous, he was now avaricious and grasping. His gifts were rare and no longer princely, and his courtiers complained of his excessive parsimony. The engaging qualities that had won for him the regard of the people in his earlier days, and aided him to establish the throne, had disappeared; but he was still affable, and retained his fondness for splendid attire. His unequalled symmetry of person was gone, and his strength enervated by indulgence. Jane had lost none of her influence over him, and exercised it beneficially as ever. The King's new-born avarice troubled her exceedingly, though not on her own account, but she had many suitors whom she desired to serve, and whom she was now obliged to send empty away.

Amongst those who presented themselves, one day, in the ante-chamber of her apartments in the Palace of Westminster, was William Caxton.

This remarkable individual, who was the first to introduce the art of printing into England, was then turned seventy, but was still hale and hearty, and looked as if several years of active and useful life were still left him—as, indeed, they were, for he lived to be eighty-one.

Temperate in his habits, still capable of great mental and bodily exertion, plain in attire, quiescent in look, and sedate in manner, Caxton presented a striking contrast to the indolent and luxurious Edward, whose strength had been impaired, and whose beauty and personal symmetry had been destroyed, by continual excesses.

On the marriage of Margaret of York, Edward's sister, to Charles the Bold, Caxton, who had been engaged in commercial pursuits in Holland and Flanders, was appointed to a place in the household of the Duchess, and, by her command, translated and printed Raoul Lefevre's "History of Troy."

Shortly afterwards he returned to his own country. Patronised by Lord Rivers, the Queen's brother, and protected by the Bishop

of Hereford, he established a printing-press in Westminster Abbey. Here was produced his renowned "Game of Chess," which enjoys the distinction of being the first book printed in England. Here, also, were printed many other books, among which were the poems of Chaucer; and the famous printer was still adding to his long list of marvellous works, when he presented himself, on the morning in question, in Jane's ante-chamber.

When Caxton's name was announced by the usher, Jane desired that he might be instantly admitted, and expressing her pleasure at seeing him, she presented him to the King, who was fortunately with her at the time.

Edward was seated in a fauteuil, propped up by cushions, with his foot on a talbouret, conversing with Malbouche, who stood beside him; but he slightly raised himself as Caxton was brought forward, and, kneeling down, proffered him a small book.

"Deign, sire," he said, "to accept this psalter, printed expressly for your own use. I regard it as the best specimen of my art, or I should not presume to offer it to your Majesty."

"'Tis beautifully executed," said Edward, taking the psalter from him, and motioning him to rise. "You have achieved wonders, good Master Caxton."

"The art is only in its infancy, my liege," replied the printer, modestly. "Wonders, no doubt, will be achieved by those who come after me."

"Meantime, you have done much," said Jane, to whom the King had handed the book, and who seemed greatly pleased with it. "This great invention," she said, "which you have so successfully carried out, will be one of the memorable events of his Majesty's reign."

"Ay, marry, we have reason to feel proud of you, good Master Caxton," said Edward. "When my sister, the Duchess of Burgundy, wrote to me that you had printed for her Raoul Lefevre's 'History of Troy,' I did not comprehend that a greater feat had been accomplished than any deed of arms, and that you had conquered a kingdom hitherto unknown. Since then I have watched your progress with much interest, and it has been matter of the highest satisfaction to me that you have chosen our capital, and not a foreign city, as the scene of your important labours. My brother, Lord Rivers, hath often spoken of you in terms of the warmest commendation; and I have fully intended, though I have too long neglected to do so, to visit your printing-press in Westminster Abbey."

"Why not go there now, my liege?" cried Jane. "Of all things, I should like to see this wonder-working press!"

"'Twill, indeed, be a great gratification if your Majesty will so far honour me," said Caxton, delighted by the proposition; "but I am wholly unprepared."

"No preparation is necessary," said the King. "If the visit be postponed, it may never be made."

"Very true, sire," said Malbouche. "Your

Majesty constantly forms good resolutions, but rarely keeps them. 'Tis too much trouble,' or 'Another time will be best.' An excuse is never wanting."

"I have had so much fatigue, that I am now glad of repose," said the King.

"I do not wonder at it, my liege," remarked Caxton. "Though, for my own part, nothing wearies so much as idleness. But then I have not the same excuse as your Majesty."

"In sooth, I have no excuse," said Edward. "My health suffers from want of exercise, and my physicians counsel me to spend five or six hours each day on horseback."

"And so do I, my liege," observed Jane. "You must, perforce, return to Windsor, and hunt daily in the forest."

"And forego grand banquets for a time," added Malbouche. "I am the best physician."

"Wouldst starve me, knave?" cried Edward, testily.

"No, my liege," replied the jester. "But I would limit your repast to a dozen dishes, and never allow it to exceed twenty. Nor would I suffer you to consume more than three flasks of that good wine of Chalosse, sent you by Louis of France, of which your Majesty is so fond."

Caxton could scarce repress a smile.

"Faith, the wine is so good, that I am tempted to drink too much of it!" remarked the King.

"A war with France would prove a certain cure for all your Majesty's ailments," said Caxton.

"I must not have recourse to it," rejoined the King. "But let us go see your printing-press."

The party then left the palace by a private door, and proceeded to the Abbey.

II.

THE VISIT TO THE CAXTON PRINTING PRESS.

The chamber in which stood the first printing-press established in England was situated at the back of the Abbey near the cloisters, and had once been a chapel, whence originated the designation still applied to a printer's work-room.

In this antique apartment, which was built of stone, and had a groined roof, and pointed windows filled with stained glass, was set up the cumbersome machine that had already wrought so many wonders. Near it were ranged a few frames of the simplest and most primitive construction, furnished with cases containing the handsome black letter used by Caxton.

On one side was a large oak table, piled high with folios bound in vellum, and some books of smaller size, all being products of the Caxton press.

Behind the table, in a deep recess, stood a desk and stool—the desk being covered with papers, and the stool occupied by a Franciscan friar, who was evidently compiling some historical work from the documents placed before him.

Three apprentices of very sedate deportment, and attired in jerkins of coarse brown serge, were at work, picking out letters from the cases with great deliberation.

An air of extreme quietude pervaded the chamber.

On the entrance of the royal party the apprentices suspended their work, and the monk ceased writing, and withdrew into the depths of the recess. But Jane noticed him, and a feeling of uneasiness, for which she could scarcely account, came over her.

"How tranquil all seems here, good Master Caxton!" remarked Edward, as he looked around. "Yours must be an agreeable occupation since it can be thus conducted."

"We are as quiet as if we were in a convent, my liege," replied Caxton. "Nay, many holy men lend me aid. Friar Sylvius, who has left his desk, is compiling a portion of my *Polychronicon*."

"To what does that work relate?" inquired Jane.

"When completed, 'twill be a chronicle of the chief events of his Majesty's reign," rejoined Caxton. "Father Sylvius is now preparing a narrative of the recent expedition to France, with an account of the treaty with King Louis."

On hearing this, Edward expressed much satisfaction, and said he would question the friar anon, and, if need be, give him some information. Caxton then proceeded to explain the process of printing, and, to demonstrate it more clearly, caused a few lines to be set up, and pulled at the press, addressed to the *Dame de Beaulieu*. The sheet was respectfully presented by one of the apprentices to Jane, who bestowed a boon upon them.

The books, of which mention has been made as lying on the table, were next examined, and much admired by the King and his companion.

"All these have been printed by me within the last few years," said Caxton, as he displayed them. "This is the 'Sayings of the Philosophers'; this is a translation of Ovid's 'Book of Metamorphoses'; here are the 'Chronicle of England'; here is the 'History of Reynard the Fox'; here is 'Godfrey of Bouillogne'; this is the 'Pilgrimage of the Soul'; and this is the 'Liber Festivalis.'"

"A goodly collection, in truth, Master Caxton," observed Edward, glancing at the volumes as they were handed to him. "I am well acquainted with two of them, 'Godfrey of Bouillogne' and 'Reynard the Fox.' Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' I have read in the original Latin, and I hope to profit by the 'Sayings of the Philosophers.' You recommended to me the 'Pilgrimage of the Soul,'" he added, to Jane; "but I have not yet read the work."

"I have studied it carefully," said Jane; "and can pronounce it an excellent treatise. But your Majesty has read all Chaucer's Poems, which have likewise been collected by Master Caxton."

"Ay, marry!" rejoined Edward; "I have read them with infinite delectation." But

will now say a word to Father Sylvius. Come with me," he added, to Jane.

Thereupon he entered the recess, at the further end of which stood the friar, with his hood partially drawn over his face. Fancying that the King did not require his attendance, Caxton remained in the chapel.

As the King approached, Father Sylvius bowed reverently, but did not raise his hood, so that Jane could not discover his features. But her uneasiness increased, and when he spoke, his voice vibrated to the inmost recesses of her breast.

"We learn from Master Caxton that you are writing a chronicle of our reign, holy father," said Edward. "We hope the record will be faithful."

"I have merely undertaken to describe your Majesty's expedition to France," replied the friar. "I am so far qualified for the task, in that I was present at the time. My sole regret is, that I have not a battle, like that of Asincour, to recount."

"You may yet have your wish," rejoined the King. "Our cousin Louis seems inclined to violate the treaty of Picquigny. If he continues to trifle with us in regard to the marriage of the Dauphin with our daughter, the Lady Elizabeth, we shall call him to a strict account; and if we again invade France, thou may'st rest assured we will not return without having taken from him two of his duchies."

"Sire," said the Franciscan, in a deep, low voice, "no second invasion will take place!"

"Ha! what mean'st thou?" exclaimed Edward, sharply. "Dost pretend to pry into the future?"

"No, my liege," replied Father Sylvius. "But the opportunity of successfully invading France is gone. You cannot count upon the support of the Flemings, who are now attached to the interests of Louis. Charles the Bold is dead. The Duke of Bretagne is afflicted with an illness that renders him incapable of any great enterprise. Your new allies, the Kings of Spain and Portugal, will not assist you. It follows, therefore, that if you undertake another war with France, it must be alone and unaided—and this you will not do."

"Thou art mistaken, father," cried Edward. "Let Louis provoke me, and he shall feel my wrath—feel it in every vein in his heart. I will strike a blow that he cannot resist."

"That you might do so, my liege, were you strong, as of old, I doubt not," said Father Sylvius. "But you may find, when you most need them, that your energies are departed. Think not of war, but make your peace with Heaven. It may be," he added, with impressive solemnity, "that you will not have too much time allowed you for repentance."

With difficulty, Edward restrained his wrath, but he contented himself with saying, with forced calmness,—

"Know'st thou not that thy talk is treasonable, and touches thy life?"

"That consideration will not deter me from speaking freely, sire," rejoined the Franciscan.

"I deem it my duty to warn your Majesty that your time may not be long on earth. 'Twere best, therefore, that the interval should be passed in penitence and prayer. Make atonement if you have done wrong or injustice."

"Have I done thee wrong, that thou dar'st address me thus?" demanded Edward.

"The greatest wrong that man can endure," replied the monk. "Thou hast taken my wife from me."

And throwing back his hood, he displayed the features of Alban Shore.

Even Edward recoiled at the sight of the man he had so deeply injured.

"Let us go hence, my liege," said Jane. "His looks terrify me."

Shore was again about to speak, but the King commanded him, in a stern, menacing tone, to be silent.

"I spare thee, though thou dost richly deserve death," said Edward. "But put a bridle henceforth on thy tongue, or no mercy shall be shown thee."

"Sire, give heed to my words," said Shore. "I am not distraught, as you may imagine, nor have I any desire of vengeance. But I warn you that the evil day is at hand. Thou, also, art warned!" he added to Jane.

"Spare him, my liege! spare him, for my sake!" she cried, seeing that the King was about to order the imprudent man's arrest.

Though highly incensed, Edward yielded, and went forth with her. Calming himself by a great effort, he spoke with as much composure to Caxton as if nothing had occurred to disturb him, and shortly afterwards quitted the chapel with his attendants.

III.

FOX AND GESE.

THE Court had removed from Westminster to Windsor Castle, and Edward had not been at the latter place many days when intelligence was brought him that the young Duchess Marie of Burgundy, daughter of Charles the Bold, whom Clarence had sought in marriage, but who had bestowed her hand upon Maximilian, Duke of Austria, had been killed by a fall from her horse while hawking.

This sad event disturbed the King greatly, inasmuch as it was likely to lead to important occurrences. The ill-fated Duchess, thus suddenly snatched away in the spring of life, left one child, a daughter, then only three and a half years old. Marguerite of Austria, the child in question, was now the greatest heiress of the day; and it was said that when the wily Louis of France heard of the death of the Duchess, wholly disregarding his treaty with the King of England, he resolved to affiancé the infant Duchess to the Dauphin.

This startling piece of news, conveyed by the English ambassadors at the Court of France, was well calculated to alarm Edward; but after reflecting upon it, and consulting with the Queen, he thought it improbable, well knowing that Maximilian, the father of the child, would be averse to the alliance; and

he therefore contented himself with instructing his ambassador, the Lord Howard, who was then at Plessis-les-Tours, with Louis, to watch carefully over the cunning King's proceedings, and report them. For his own part, he said, he refused to doubt his good brother's sincerity.

A more impolitic course could not have been adopted. Heavily bribed by Louis, the ambassadors sent their royal master no further information till the secret treaty for the marriage, of which they were perfectly cognizant, had been concluded at Arras, and the little Princess was on the way to Paris.

Whatever rumours reached him, Edward disregarded them, and smiled incredulously when warned by some of his faithful councillors against the artifices of Louis.

In a large withdrawing-room, belonging to the Queen's apartments in the Castle, hung with cloth of gold arras, and otherwise splendidly furnished, were assembled, one afternoon, all the King's children—namely, two young princes and six princesses; and a more charming collection of young persons, ranging from very tender years to well-nigh sixteen, could not be found.

The Queen had brought her royal husband a numerous family, for three were dead. Of the eight left, all were distinguished for grace and good looks, and some of the princesses were exquisitely beautiful. Elizabeth of York, the eldest of Edward's daughters, who was now, as just intimated, in her sixteenth year, possessed great personal charms, though they were scarcely fully developed, and was extremely amiable in disposition. Her own choice had not been consulted in the important marriage arranged for her by the King her father; but although she had no predilection for the Dauphin, and had not even exchanged a letter with him, she was naturally well pleased with the notion of becoming Queen of France. Eventually, as is well known, she made as great a match, being wedded to Henry VII. of England; but this could not be then foreseen, for Richmond was then held captive in Brittany.

The Princess Elizabeth had a slight and graceful figure, and her features were regular, beautifully moulded, and characterised by great sweetness of expression. She was very richly dressed, as, indeed, were all her sisters, even the youngest of them, who was merely a little girl. Her fair tresses were covered by a caul of gold, and allowed to stream down her back, while her slender waist was spanned by a magnificent girdle. Her coat-harding was of figured satin, and worn so long as almost to hide her pointed shoes.

The young princesses, her sisters, were all equally richly dressed; three of them, Cicely, Anne, and Bridget, in kirtles of cloth of gold and silver; and the two younger, Mary and Catherine, in little gowns of embroidered velvet.

All five were excessively pretty, but perhaps the prettiest of the whole party was the second daughter, Cicely, who bore a marked

resemblance to her royal father. She was then promised to the Prince of Scotland, but actually married Lord Wells. The Princess Cicely had lovely features, rich brown tresses, soft blue eyes, and a brilliant complexion.

The Princess Anne resembled her mother, and promised to be quite as beautiful as the Queen was in her younger days. She was to have married into the royal house of Austria, but became Duchess of Norfolk.

Bridget, who, even as a child, had a meek and devout appearance, became a nun. The Princess Mary ought to have been Queen of Denmark, but died too soon.

Edward would fain have married his youngest daughter, Catherine, to the heir to the throne of Portugal, but fate decreed it otherwise, and gave the fair Princess to an English noble, William Courtenay, Earl of Devonshire.

Thus it will be seen that not one of these young princesses hurried according to their royal father's plans. Perhaps they were happier in the alliances they formed. We cannot answer that question. Fortunately, the princes, their brothers, could not foresee the dark fate that awaited them.

Edward, Prince of Wales, then nearly thirteen, was graver and more thoughtful than consorted with his years. He was of a studious turn, and not so fond of sports and exercises as his father had been at his age, but he was not allowed to neglect them. His health was somewhat delicate, and this gave a pale hue to his skin, and, perhaps, imparted a slightly melancholy cast to his countenance. He might have divined that his life would not be long. His eyes were large and black, but lacked fire, and had an almost feminine softness; and his cheeks were not so rounded as they should have been, and wanted bloom. His looks were full of sensibility. His limbs were well proportioned, but extremely slender, and he was tall for his age. His dark-brown hair was cut short over the brow, which was paler than his cheek, and bore traces of great delicacy; but long locks hung down at the sides and at the back.

Very different from the Prince of Wales was Richard Duke of York. He was rather more than three years younger than his brother, was full of health and spirit, having a rosy complexion, bright blue eyes, and long, fair locks.

The young Duke was never happier than when in the saddle. He was constantly in the tilt-yard, and had a little suit of armour made for him and a small lance.

On the present occasion he was attired in a white satin doublet, figured with silver, his surcoat being of blue velvet, ornamented with the royal cognisance. His long hose were of white silk, and his shoes of velvet.

Though different in character, as in appearance, the two brothers were strongly attached to each other, and evinced their regard by a most affectionate manner. As they now stood together in the midst of their fair sisters, the

Prince of Wales had his arm over the young Duke's shoulder.

In another part of the room three or four middle-aged dames, who acted as governesses to the young princesses, were seated at a table playing at *marteraux*—a game in which little ivory balls were placed in the holes of a board—with the two tutors of the young princes. The pages in attendance were amusing themselves with small nine-pins—then called *clo-keys*, but they had retired into the deep embrasure of a window, and left their charges to themselves. Other attendants in the royal livery were collected at the lower end of the room.

"Madame la Dauphine," said the Prince of Wales to his eldest sister, "I suppose you will soon set out for France, to conclude your marriage with the Dauphin. I hear that the Sire de Beaujeu, with his wife and a brilliant company, are to be sent to meet you at Calais, and conduct you to Paris, where you will have a magnificent reception."

"You know more than I do," replied the Princess Elizabeth. "I have heard nothing about it. But I believe that a messenger from our ambassador, the Lord Howard, is expected to-day. Then, no doubt, I shall learn my fate."

"I wish you would take me with you, Madame la Dauphine," cried the Duke of York. "I should so much like to see Paris. I am told the *filles* will be splendid—far finer than any we have in London."

"Oh! take us all with you, dear Madame la Dauphine!" cried several small voices, delightedly. "We can go as *demoiselles d'honneur*."

"You must ask the Queen, and not me," replied the Princess Elizabeth. "If she consents, I shall be delighted to take you."

"I have already petitioned her Majesty," said the Princess Cicely; "and though I almost went down on my knees, she had the cruelty to refuse me."

"Oh, dear! then there is little chance for us!" cried the Princesses Anne and Mary.

"You forget you are both engaged to be married," remarked the Prince of Wales. "What would the King of Denmark say to you, Mary?"

"I don't care for the King of Denmark!" replied the little Princess. "I have never seen him!"

"I have never seen the Dauphin," observed the Princess Elizabeth. "Yet I would not do anything to displease him."

"None of us have seen our intended husbands," said Cicely. "Nor shall we be allowed to do so till our turn comes. I have no wish to visit Edinburgh, where my sweet Prince dwells, but I have a very great desire to go to Paris."

"I thought you were frightened of King Louis?" said the Duke of York.

"So I am; dreadfully frightened of him," rejoined Cicely. "But he won't be at the Louvre. He never leaves Plessis-les-Tours. I wouldn't go there for the world. They say all

the habitations near the chateau are pulled down and the trees hung with dead bodies."

"Those are idle stories," remarked the Princess Elizabeth. "I make no doubt Plessis is a very pleasant place, and the old King extremely good-natured."

"Plessis, I am sure, cannot be worse than the Tower," remarked the Duke of York. "I am always melancholy when I go there. Yet the King, our father, likes the place."

"He has not been there of late," observed the Prince of Wales. "I have never liked the Tower since our uncle Clarence died there in that mysterious manner."

"Yes, that was a sad thing," said the Duke of York. Then lowering his voice, he added, "I wish it had been our uncle Gloucester, instead."

"You are an ungrateful boy," said the Princess Elizabeth, gravely. "Your uncle Gloucester is very fond of you."

"His love is feigned," said the little Duke. "I don't like him."

"Neither do I," observed the Prince of Wales. "He is malicious and spiteful."

"You wrong him, Edward," said Elizabeth. "Tis his manner. He has a good heart."

"He has imposed upon you, sweet sister!" rejoined the Prince of Wales. "I am not to be deceived by him."

The Princess made no answer, but, turning to little Bridget, who had hitherto taken no part in the conversation, she said,—

"When I am Queen of France, as I shall be one of these days, Bridget—for the King is growing old—you must come and stay with me at the Louvre."

"That cannot be, Elizabeth!" rejoined the little girl, looking at her fixedly. "I shall be an abbess before you are Queen."

"Bridget doesn't know what she is talking about," cried Cicely.

"Yes, I do," replied the little Princess. "I mean to be a nun, and in time I shall become an abbess; and when I am an abbess, Elizabeth will come to see me, but I shall not go to her."

This reply made the others look rather grave, but the Prince of Wales called out,—

"We have talked quite long enough. Let us amuse ourselves with some game."

"What shall we play at?" cried the Duke of York.

"I am for Prime-Mérimé," said Cicely.

"And I for Queue-Jeu," said Anne.

"I prefer Cache-cache," said Mary.

"My game is Cheval de Bois," said the little Catherine.

"And mine Pinco-sans-rire," added the Prince of Wales. "But what say you, Bridget?"

"I don't mean to play," replied the future Abbess, demurely.

"Since every one has a different choice, I will decide," said the Duke of York. "We will play at fox and geese. You shall all be the geese, and I will be the fox."

And as they all dispersed, except the Princess Elizabeth and little Bridget, who re-

remained looking on, the young Prince bent down his head, rounded his shoulders as much as he could, and altered his gait, so as to give a grotesque representation of the Duke of Gloucester.

Though absurd, the likeness was instantly recognised, and the younger girls screamed with laughter, as the little Prince chased them about the room, marching in a very haughty manner, like Gloucester.

Seeing what was going on, the pages joined in the merriment, and the governesses and tutors looked round from the *marteau* table, at which they were seated, and smiled.

The royal children were in the very midst of the fun, when the arras curtain masking the entrance to the adjoining apartment was suddenly drawn aside, and the King and Queen came in, closely followed by the Duke of Gloucester.

IV.

HOW EDWARD DEEPLY RESENTED THE AFFRONT OFFERED HIM BY LOUIS, AND VOWED TO INVADE FRANCE AGAIN.

So quiet was the entrance of the royal party, and so engrossed were the young Duke of York and the little princesses by their game, that for a few moments they were quite unconscious they were observed by the very person who ought not to have seen them.

Gloucester had, therefore, the mortification of seeing himself mimicked by his youthful nephew; but what was infinitely more annoying, he heard the laughter and jests excited by the representation.

Nevertheless, he preserved his countenance, and would have feigned not to understand what was going on, if Malbouche, who was close behind him, had not called his attention to the little Duke.

"Perdie! his Highness is a rare mimic," he cried. "He has caught me to the life."

"Go to, knave!" rejoined Gloucester. "The mockery is not meant for thee, as thou well know'st."

"For whom, then, can it be intended?" said the jester, innocently. "I cannot suppose the Duke would ridicule your Grace. Yet, now I look again, it may be so."

At this moment the game stopped, and the little actors engaged in it seemed abashed. The principal offender expected to be severely reprimanded, but the King merely said to him,—

"Personal deformities ought never to be derided. You must not do the like again, or you will be corrected. Go and apologize to the Duke, your uncle."

The young Prince instantly obeyed. Assuming a penitential air, he went up to Gloucester, and said,—

"Your pardon, gentle uncle, if I have offended you."

"Nay, I have been highly diverted by your drollery, fair nephew," replied Gloucester. "But 'tis not always safe to mimic people to their face. There are some who might resent it, though I am not one of them."

"I hope you will not bear me malice, gentle uncle," said the little Duke. "They say you are spiteful; but I do not believe it, for I have ever found you good-natured."

"And so I am," rejoined Gloucester. "They who call me spiteful do me great injustice," he added, glancing at the Queen. "I am as inoffensive as a lap-dog—unless provoked."

"And then as savage as a wild boar," muttered Malbouche.

"Methinks my uncle Gloucester is really angry with me," observed the Duke of York in a whisper to the Queen. "He says he is not, but the glance of his eye contradicted his words."

"Rest easy, fair son," she rejoined, in the same tone. "I will make your peace with him anon. But offend him not again; for, as I have often before told you, he is extremely malignant."

"He is watching us now, and guesses what you are saying," whispered the Duke. "Heaven save me from him!"

Among Edward's redeeming qualities was his love for his children, who were all warmly attached to him, though the strict etiquette observed at Court prevented any strong demonstration of their regard.

As soon as they were aware of his presence, they all advanced ceremoniously towards him, attended by their governors and tutors, and each made him a profound obeisance, and another reverence to the Queen.

The King, however, took all his younger children in his arms, and kissed them affectionately.

Little Bridget appeared to be his favourite, for he gazed tenderly into her face, as he held her up before him.

"And so you wish to become a nun, my little darling?" he asked. "What put the notion in thy head?"

"Heaven, sire," she replied, in her childish voice. "The Queen, my mother, has promised to place me in a convent."

"Only for a time," observed her Majesty.

"And I promise to wed thee to a King, my beloved child," said Edward. "Thou may'st therefore choose between a palace and a convent."

"I choose the convent," replied Bridget.

"Then I shall lose thee," observed the King, with a sigh.

"No, sire; you will always know where to find me," she replied. "And I shall always be able to pray for your Majesty and the Queen."

"Heaven bless thee, my sweet child!" exclaimed Edward, kissing her, as he set her down.

He then turned to the Princess Elizabeth, who was standing near, and said,—

"Ah! Madame la Dauphine, you will soon attain the exalted position to which you are destined. Within a week you will set out for Paris, there to seek your husband, the Dauphin. I am in hourly expectation of a messenger from the Lord Howard, our ambassador to the Court of France, and I doubt not I shall receive

from King Louis a satisfactory answer to my peremptory demand that your marriage with the Dauphin be forthwith solemnized. I will brook no further delay; and to prevent any more trifling on his part, I have given him to understand that his engagement, made with me at Picquigny, must now be fulfilled, or he must prepare for war."

"I hope this demand may not lead to a rupture between your Majesty and King Louis," observed the Princess. "I should grieve to be the cause of a war."

"Have no fear," replied Edward. "I am obliged to use threats to my good cousin. But you will see how mild his answer will be. As I have just said, you may prepare for your immediate departure for Paris."

"I am ready to obey your Majesty's command in all things," said the Princess. "But I cannot be happier at the French Court than I am here. Possibly I may never see England again, and that thought makes me feel sad, at times."

"Then do not let it trouble you more," said the King. "Be sure the Dauphin will not prevent you from visiting us, should you feel so inclined. But you will become so enamoured of France, that you will have no desire to quit the country. The French Court is far more splendid than our own, and will be far gayer when you are its mistress."

"Wedded to the Dauphin, you will be quite my equal," said the Queen.

"And the King's state of health forbids all chance of long life, so you will soon be Queen," added Edward.

"I hope the Dauphin will like me," said the Princess.

"Be as good a wife to him as the Queen, your mother, has been to me, and he cannot fail to be content," said the King.

"I will strive to imitate her, sire," replied the Princess.

"One piece of counsel I will venture to give you, Madame la Dauphine," said Gloucester. "Meddle with nothing while Louis lives. When he is gone, do what you please."

"Sound advice," cried Edward. "You cannot be too careful with the jealous old King."

Just then, the Lord Chamberlain entered the room with a letter.

"Ha! the messenger has arrived from France!" cried Edward.

"This instant, my liege," replied Hastings; "and he brings this letter from Lord Howard to your Majesty. I trust its contents will please you."

"Have you any doubt?" said the King, looking at him.

"I doubt all that comes from King Louis, sire," replied Hastings.

Edward eagerly broke the seal of the letter, and as he scanned its contents, those who watched him—and almost every eye was upon him—could perceive that he was agitated by suppressed fury.

When he had finished reading the despatch, he crumpled it in his hand, and flinging it

from him, gave way to a violent explosion of rage.

"Ah, thou liar and deceiver!" he exclaimed. "Perjured and perfidious as thou art, bitterly shalt thou rue thy treachery! Never will I rest till I have taken vengeance upon thee; never will I forgive the outrageous affront offered me! I swear it by my father's head! Within a month I will invade thy territories with an army doubling in number that which I took with me before; and when I have taken thy kingdom from thee, and made thee and thy son captive, thou wilt regret that thou didst not keep faith with me!"

So furious were the King's looks and gestures as he gave utterance to these menacing words, that the royal children retreated from him in terror, and at a sign from the Queen were hurried out of the room by their governesses and tutors.

Only the Prince of Wales and the Princess Elizabeth were left, and they looked frightened.

No one ventured to address the infuriated monarch till this access of rage had passed by; but when he grew somewhat calmer, the Queen said to him,—

"I comprehend that Louis has broken his engagement; but what hath happened?"

"Madame," replied Edward, "it pains me to the heart to tell you, but I cannot withhold the fact, that our beloved daughter, who has so long borne the title of Dauphine of France, has been outrageously rejected by the double-dealer, Louis. Yes, my sweet love, 'tis even so," he added to the Princess. "Thou, the fairest and best born princess in Europe, hast been shamefully slighted by him."

"In what manner, my liege?" she inquired.

"Lord Howard's letter, which I have just cast from me," replied the King, "informs me that, three days ago, the Dauphin was betrothed at Amboise to Margaret of Austria, daughter of the Duke Maximilian, in the presence of a large crowd of nobles."

"Is thy brilliant dream thus ended?" cried the Princess, unable to repress her emotion.

"Take comfort, my sweet child," cried the Queen, tenderly embracing her. "The King, your father, will make another match for you, better than the one broken off."

"That cannot be," said the Princess.

"I promise you shall be a queen," said Edward. "But my first step shall be to punish the offender. I will immediately return to Westminster, and summon the whole of the nobles, and tell them I have resolved to declare war against the perfidious Louis, to avenge the affront offered to us, to them, and the whole kingdom, in the person of our dearly beloved daughter."

"Every voice will be with you, my liege," said Hastings. "Every sword will be drawn for the Princess."

"I pray your Majesty to take me with you to France," said the Prince of Wales, kneeling to the King. "I will show the Dauphin that he shall not affront my sister!"

"You shall go," replied Edward. "I am well pleased with the request."

"You may become as renowned as the first Prince of Wales, gentle nephew," said Gloucester. "If his Majesty will trust you to my charge, and the campaign lasts long enough, I will teach you the art of war. I trust, my liege, there will be no more treaties."

"Not with Louis," rejoined the King, sternly. "He shall not delude me again. If I sign a peace, it shall be at Paris, and I will dictate my own terms. Come, madame," he added, taking the Queen's hand to lead her forth. "Let us to Westminster. This is a bitter disappointment to us both, but the wrong done shall be requited a hundredfold."

"Sister," said the Prince of Wales to the Princess, as they followed the royal pair out of the room, "my resolution is taken. Either I will slay the Dauphin, or the Dauphin shall slay me."

"I would not check your valour," she replied, smiling through her tears; "but it is Louis who is in fault, not the Dauphin."

"Then I will slay Louis!" rejoined the Prince.

V.

WHAT PASSED IN THE KING'S ANTE-CHAMBER;
AND OF THE SECRET INSTRUCTIONS GIVEN BY
GLOUCESTER TO CATSEY.

EDWARD acted with unwonted energy.

On the day after his return to Westminster, he summoned all his nobles, and acquainting them with the galling affront he had received, announced his intention of at once declaring war against Louis. At the same time, he did not neglect to refer to his own pretensions to the throne of France, but stated emphatically that he was now determined to assert them.

The address was responded to with enthusiasm. All the peers present expressed the greatest indignation at the ill-faith and duplicity of Louis, pronounced the war just and necessary, and raising their hands with one accord, vowed to lay down their lives in his Majesty's service.

The Lord Mayor and the citizens, who were next summoned, were equally enthusiastic, and undertook to raise all the money required.

Moreover, the proclamation of a war with France, which immediately followed, caused great satisfaction throughout the kingdom. Thus Edward had every prospect of obtaining the vengeance he desired.

In return for the hearty support the King had experienced, he gave a series of grand banquets; and he indulged so freely at these entertainments, that his health manifestly suffered.

The change in his appearance was so perceptible, that those who loved him became greatly alarmed; while the few who desired his death, from ambitious or other motives, began to think that the crisis was at hand. Among the latter was Gloucester. In his dark breast fresh hopes were kindled by his royal brother's recklessness.

On the morning after one of these grand

banquets, at which the King had sat longer than usual, and drank more deeply, several nobles and other important personages were assembled in the ante-room communicating with his Majesty's bed-chamber.

Though the hour was somewhat late, Edward had not yet risen, and some curiosity, not unmingled with uneasiness, was exhibited to learn how his Majesty had passed the night. The only person allowed entrance to the royal chamber was the Marquis of Dorset, the Queen's son by her first marriage. Dorset was Constable of the Tower, and keeper of the King's treasures. The young noble had not yet reappeared.

At length the door opened, and Dorset came forth, looking very grave. In reply to the anxious inquiries addressed to him, he simply said, "His Majesty has passed a bad night, and will not be disturbed."

Among the distinguished personages in the ante-room were the Duke of Buckingham and the Lords Hastings and Stanley; and as they were special favourites of the King, and generally admitted to his presence at all times, they naturally concluded that they could now go in; but the Marquis of Dorset, noticing their design, stopped them, and said,—

"My lords, the King must not be disturbed."

"How is this, my lord?" cried Hastings. "Is his Majesty unwell? 'Tis the first time I have been excluded from his chamber! I will go in!"

"And so will I!" said Buckingham.

"Do as you please, my lords," observed Dorset. "I have repeated his Majesty's injunctions."

And, bowing haughtily, he moved on through the ante-chamber.

A strong feeling of animosity, as we have already mentioned, existed between the old nobility and the Queen's family, of whom Lord Rivers and the Marquis of Dorset were the head. Hastings and the others were, therefore, highly displeased that Dorset should be preferred to them, but they hesitated to disobey the King's express commands.

"If aught happens, that presumptuous upstart's pride shall be lowered!" said Buckingham. "'Tis my belief he has kept us from seeing his Majesty. I hope nothing ails the King."

"Nothing more than a sick headache, caused by last night's excess," said Hastings. "But Dorset would have us believe that his Majesty is really ill."

"And so he is," observed Lord Stanley. "Most assuredly, if he continues in this mad course, he will kill himself."

"He will never be able to conduct the war with France in person," said Hastings.

"No; he must relinquish the command of the army to Gloucester," said Buckingham; "and that will mortify his Majesty greatly. He counted upon entering Paris in triumph."

"His absence will be a great gain to Louis, and render the issue of the contest doubtful."

said Lord Stanley. "Tis almost to be regretted now that the war has been undertaken."

Just then the Duke of Gloucester entered the ante-chamber, attended by Catesby. He directed his steps towards the three nobles, who advanced to salute him.

"Is not the King visible?" he asked.

"No one has seen him but Dorset," replied Hastings. "But your Highness can go in, if you list."

"Is he ill? Is Doctor Lewis with him?" said Gloucester, quickly. "If so, I will see him."

"His Majesty, I trow, will be well enough to join the banquet this evening, and drink more wine of Chalosse," observed Buckingham, significantly.

"Ha! is that all?" cried Gloucester.

"Your Highness should dissuade him from his fatal course," said Hastings. "If he persists in it, there can but be one result."

"I dissuade him!" cried Gloucester. "I have no influence with him, as, you wot well. Get Mistress Shore to advise him. She might check him in this baneful habit. None else can. I am sorry not to see the King—but it matters not. He might not be in the humour to talk to me. I am about to set out to York, as I have some matters to arrange there for his Majesty, before we start for France."

Then, taking Buckingham's arm, he whispered in his ear, "Should aught happen—you understand—should aught happen, I say, send an express to me to York."

"Without an instant's delay," replied the Duke.

"Enough," replied Gloucester. Then, turning to the others, he said aloud, "Farewell, my lords! Tell the King I have been here, but would not disturb him. I will write to his Majesty from York."

With this, he moved off, bowing haughtily to the throng of nobles, as he passed through their midst.

Near the door the room was clear, and halting there, he said to Catesby, by whom he was still attended, "Remain here. Attend the banquet to-night, and write me word how his Majesty looks. Dost heed?"

Catesby bowed assent, and the Duke added, in a low and deeply-significant voice, "The work thou hast to do must be no longer delayed. Thou hast the phial I gave thee?"

"I carry it ever about me, your Highness," repeated the other.

"So it to-night," said Gloucester. "Use it cautiously, as I bade thee. A few drops will suffice. The King drinks nothing but wine of Chalosse. Hand him the cup."

Catesby bowed, and the Duke quitted the ante-chamber.

VI.

NOW THE WARRANT FOR TEN THOUSAND GOLDEN CROWNS BY THE KING TO JANE DISAPPEARED.

EDWARD declined to hold any audience that evening, on the plea of slight indisposition;

but as soon as he had completed his toilette, which occupied him some time—for, as already stated, he was extraordinarily particular about his dress—he repaired to Jane's apartments, which were situated in a wing of the palace, overlooking the gardens and the river, splendidly furnished, and hung with the finest arras.

The fair mistress of these magnificent rooms received him almost ceremoniously, as was her wont; but he looked so exhausted, that she took his hand and led him to a fauteuil, into which he immediately sank.

Seeing his exhausted condition, she caused some refreshments to be brought, and poured him out a cup of hippocras with her own hand. He only ate a few conserves and cates, but the cordial beverage revived him.

At a sign from his Majesty, all the attendants withdrew, and they were left alone together.

"I must have done with these banquets, Jane," said the King. "Were it not that I have invited the Lord Mayor and the chief citizens of London to dine with me to-day, I would forswear revelry altogether. But I cannot disappoint my worthy friends at this juncture. However, to-day's banquet shall be the last. On that I am firmly resolved."

"I have little reliance on your good resolutions, sire," said Jane. "Formed in the morning, they are constantly broken in the evening."

"In sooth, I find it difficult to refrain," said Edward. "This hippocras is very good. Fill my cup again."

Jane shook her head, and said, playfully, "Your Majesty is in my hands now, and I shall take care of you. If I could wait upon you at the banquet this evening, you should not exceed."

"You shall be my cupbearer, if you list," replied Edward, smiling.

"I take you at your word, my liege, and accept the office," she rejoined. "I have still the costume I wore in France."

"Then don it to-night," said the King. "Be isidore again, and place yourself behind my chair. When you bid me hold, I will drink no more."

"Oh! my liege," she exclaimed, "do but act up to the wise resolve you have just formed, and far greater power will be yours than you have ever yet enjoyed. No monarch in Europe is so proudly placed as you are now. Your throne is secured. Your subjects idolize you. Your enemies fear you. You have sons to succeed you—daughters contracted to princes. All that a great king can achieve, you have accomplished. You have fought many battles, and have never been defeated; nor will you ever be defeated in the field. But you have an enemy more to be dreaded than your stoutest adversary—more than Louis himself. That enemy is here," she added, holding up the goblet. "If you conquer not this mortal foe, he will conquer you. 'Tis right you should hear the truth from me, and, however painful it may be to speak it,

I cannot remain silent. Already those who hope to profit by your death have noted the change, and laid their plans. The ambitious and designing Gloucester, against whom I have repeatedly warned your Majesty, has watched you narrowly."

"Gloucester has set out for York this very morn," remarked Edward.

"I am glad of it," she replied. "But he has left many friends behind, in whom your Majesty places confidence. Their schemes, however, will prove futile if you are true to yourself. Be the great Edward whom I first loved, whom I still love, and shall ever love; but who will sacrifice power, life, and love, if he shakes not off the fetters in which he is bound."

For some moments the King seemed buried in thought. At last, he raised his head, and looking earnestly at her, said,—

"You have touched me deeply, Jane. Tomorrow I will wholly refrain from the maddening potion."

"Why not to-night, sire?" she cried. "Oh, be persuaded by me!"

"A revel, more or less, cannot affect me seriously."

"Consult your physician, Doctor Lewis, sire. He will tell you differently."

"You know I eschew physic, and never take advice from Doctor Lewis," replied the King. "Surely, 'tis enough that you will be present to stint me in my cups! Were Alice Fordham here, she might attend you as Claude. What has become of her?"

"She has returned to her husband, my liege; and the gifts I have bestowed upon her have made her welcome to him. But she has deceived me—basely deceived me—and I no longer love her."

"In what manner has she deceived you?" inquired the King. "I am aware you have dismissed her, but I know not her fault."

"I discovered that she has taken bribes from the Duke of Gloucester, sire," replied Jane. "I did not mention the matter to your Majesty, because I thought it would anger you."

"Again Gloucester!" exclaimed the King. "He seems to be plotting everywhere."

"Since he could not induce me to take part in his schemes, sire, he tried Alice Fordham," replied Jane; "and with her he succeeded."

"Ha! this must be inquired into!" cried Edward, fiercely. "'Tis well for himself that he hath gone to York, or I would have sent him at once to the Tower. But I will have him back; and if I find him guilty, he shall—But no, no!" he added, with a sudden change of manner, and speaking in a hollow voice; "I must not have a second brother's blood upon my soul! I have had no peace since Clarence died."

"But Gloucester wrested the warrant for his brother's death from your Majesty," said Jane. "His, therefore, is the guilt. I urge no severe measures against Gloucester, but my love for your Majesty bids me say, 'Be ware of him!'"

In the hope of chasing away the King's gloom, Jane took up her lute, and sang a tender romance of which he had once been very fond. He listened as if entranced. The notes vibrated through his breast, and recalled the days when he had first heard the song.

When she ceased singing, he said, "Do you recollect, Jane, that it was on this very day—now seven years ago—that I first beheld you?"

"I recollect it well, sire," she replied, with something like a sigh. "The past seems like a dream to me."

"A happy dream, I hope?" he said.

"Too happy, sire," she rejoined. "Moments of sadness have occurred, but they have soon passed. 'Tis the waking from this long, blissful dream that I dread. I would fain slumber on to the end. Oh, if I were to lose your Majesty, what would become of me?"

"You will be wealthy, Jane," he rejoined.

"But I shall have lost all I care for—all I love!" she exclaimed. "Wealth will be nothing to me. I have not loved your Majesty for the many rich gifts you have bestowed upon me, but for yourself."

"There is nothing mercenary in your disposition, Jane; that I well know," he replied. "Moreover, I am quite aware you have given away large sums; so that you may not, after all, be so rich as you ought to be—"

"Sire," she interrupted, "I have enough. I want nothing."

"But you may want more than you have," cried Edward. "I may be snatched from you suddenly. 'Tis my business to provide for you, and I will do so at once. Here is an order on the Marquis of Dorset, the keeper of my treasures, already signed and sealed," he added, taking a paper from the richly-ornamented girdle that hung from his girdle. "Fill in the name, and the amount—ten thousand golden crowns."

"Sire, 'tis too much!" she cried.

"Obey my behest," he said.

Unable to refuse, she proceeded to a table, on which writing materials were placed, and wrote as the King had commanded her.

While she was thus occupied, Edward arose; and as soon as she had finished, he took the paper from her, and examined it."

"This sum will be paid you by Dorset," he said, as he gave her back the warrant. "'Tis meant as a provision for you in the event of my death; and I trust you will not yield to the too-generous impulses of your nature, and by giving a portion of it away, defeat my object. Keep it for yourself, I pray you. You may need it."

Jane could make no reply, for emotion stopped her. After a vain effort to speak, she fell into his arms, and shed tears upon his breast.

The scene just described was witnessed by an unseen observer.

A secret door behind the hangings, of the existence of which both the King and Jane

were ignorant, had been noiselessly opened, and the person who passed through it slightly raised the arras, and could therefore see and hear what took place.

After a while, Jane recovered from her emotion, and, as she looked up with streaming eyes at the King, he bent down and kissed her brow.

"Adieu, *ma mie*!" he said. "You will attend upon me at the banquet to-night?"

"Doubt it not, sire," she replied. "Oh, that I could banish these misgivings from my breast!"

He smiled to reassure her, but somewhat sadly; for he was not altogether free from misgiving himself.

They paused for a moment at the door before the King went forth, and she watched his stately figure as he moved slowly along the corridor, attended by a couple of pages. Often had she thus watched him; but she never beheld him take that walk again.

In her agitation, Jane had dropped the warrant given her by the King, nor did she think about it till his Majesty had disappeared. She then looked about for it; but it was gone.

Astonished and alarmed by the circumstance, she summoned an attendant, but could ascertain nothing satisfactory. No one had entered the room. Careful search was made, but the warrant could not be found.

As will have been surmised, it had fallen into the hands of the person concealed behind the hangings.

While the King and Jane stood together near the door, completely occupied with each other, this individual, who was very slightly built, and habited like a page, crept cautiously forth, took up the paper, and regained the hiding-place without being noticed.

On discovering her loss, Jane was in a state of distraction. Her first impulse was to acquaint the King with what had happened; but, on consideration, she resolved to defer all mention of the circumstance till the morrow.

VII.

OF EDWARD'S LAST BANQUET, AND HOW IT ENDED.

In the great banquetting hall of the palace, in the centre of the high table, placed at the upper part of the hall, beneath a gorgeous cloth of estate, embroidered in gold, with the royal badges of the falcon and fetterlock, the rose and sun, and the white hart, sat Edward.

Reserved for the King and his most distinguished guests, this elevated table was covered with perfumed damask, wrought with flowers and figures, and furnished with magnificent vessels of gold and silver.

Two other long tables, covered with finest cloths of diaper and resplendent with plate, ran down the sides of the hall, so as to leave a great space free to the innumerable officers and attendants, cup-bearers, carvers, sewers, and gentlemen waiters, all in the royal livery.

At these lower tables sat the citizens and the general company—the Lord Mayor, who was

no other than our old acquaintance, Randal Rubicel, the haberdasher, being assigned a place with the nobles.

Trumpeters, with clarions adorned with fringed cloth of gold, stood in the centre of the hall, and minstrels were placed in a gallery, to enliven the company with their strains during the repast.

The entertainment was conducted with regal state. At the lower tables all were seated; but when the trumpets announced the entrance of the King, the guests immediately arose.

Edward was marshalled to his seat, beneath the cloth of estate, by the Lord Chamberlain and the Vice-Chamberlain, each carrying a white staff. He was attended by several officers in embroidered velvet doublets, all of whom had chains of gold round the neck. Among these was Cateby.

When the King was seated, Isidore, who was attired in precisely the same dress he had worn in France, took his place behind the royal chair. The handsome cupbearer looked remarkably well, and excited general admiration.

Edward was magnificently arrayed, as usual. Over the richly embroidered satin doublet that encased his now portly person, he wore a purple robe, with long hanging sleeves, lined with the most precious furs.

On his right and left sat the Duke of Buckingham, the Earl of Northumberland, the Earl of Hastings, the Marquis of Dorset, and other nobles, all splendidly attired. The Lord Mayor was placed between Buckingham and Hastings, and being clad in his robes, and having the collar of S.S. round his neck, presented a very imposing appearance. Strangely altered was Randal Rubicel, and scarcely recognisable as the gallant young haberdasher of former days. He had been highly prosperous in his calling, and had grown enormously corpulent as well as rich. His features, however, were not so much changed as his person, and he was still good-looking. He was devoted to the King, and had lent his Majesty a large sum for the proposed war with France.

Illumined by great candles, almost as thick as torches, and made of perfumed wax, covered with silver tassels, and occupied by the goodly company, described, the tables looked magnificent. As we have intimated, the body of the hall was thronged with the various officers, belonging to the royal household; and through this crowd—just before the second service began—marched a score of yeomen of the kitchen, bearing great dishes, preceded by the master cook, a very stately personage, clad in damask velvet, with a chain of gold round his neck, and bearing a white wand. Trumpets were blown as these dishes were set upon the table, and the minstrels played while the contents of the dishes were discussed.

Great hilarity prevailed, for though Edward had resolved to practice unwonted moderation that day, his guests had every temptation to excess, for the wines were abundant.

DEATH OF THE WHITE HART. (See page 75.)



and as excellent as the viands, and served in flowing goblets.

According to the taste of the period, many curious and admirably executed devices, representing the King's palaces, tournaments, and even the meeting between Edward and Louis at Picquigny, were placed upon the table. These pretty receptacles were filled with confectionery, comfits, cakes and apices, which were served to those who cared to taste them.

Altogether, the banquet, destined to be his last, was one of the best ever given by the luxurious monarch; and from circumstances connected with it, which we shall presently relate, it was long afterwards remembered.

As the repast proceeded, Edward recovered his spirits, and felt so much better, and in such a mood for enjoyment, that it was with difficulty he could put a constraint upon himself. But though he did not entirely refrain, he was far more temperate than usual.

As Isidore came forward with a silver flagon to fill his cup, he remarked, in a low voice,—
"Dost thou not recognise thy former suitor?" He is seated on the right, next to the Duke of Buckingham."

"Why, that is the Lord Mayor, my liege!" exclaimed Isidore.

"Marry, the Lord Mayor was once thy suitor!" observed Edward, laughing. "Look at him again!"

"As I live, 'tis Randal Rubicel!" exclaimed Isidore.

"'Tis not surprising you knew him not at first, since he has waxed so wondrous fat," said Edward. "I need not say he is no longer a bachelor, for there is a Lady Mayoress; but he is a most worthy and liberal man, and I have a great regard for him. The Lord Mayor, however, is not the only one of your former suitors here present. All the others have been invited by my command. You will descry them at the lower tables."

Stepping back, Isidore looked around, and soon discovered that the King was not jesting.

Yes! there they all were! There sat Simon Muttelbury, the grocer; Punchoon, the vintner; Serge, the cloth-worker; Buckram, the mercer; Hide, the skinner, and half a dozen others, whose features Isidore well remembered, though, like Randal Rubicel, they were all much changed. Most of them had grown stout, and all had the easy, comfortable look of married men.

But where was Shore? Was he present on this grand festive occasion? Not as a guest, but he might have come thither uninvited.

So Jane thought; and as her eye wandered over the crowd in the body of the hall, it alighted upon Father Sylvius.

Joyously the feast went on. Fresh dishes were brought in. The sewers and carvers did their devoir. Again and again, the goblets were replenished by the cup-bearers, and with the choicest wines. The minstrels played their liveliest strains. Laughter, scarcely

subdued by the King's presence, resounded from the lower tables.

Yet, despite the hilarity and enjoyment everywhere prevailing, Edward became sad. Some thoughts crossed him. With the sound of revelry ringing in his ears—with the spectacle before him of that grand banquet and his joyous guests—he felt as if he could take no part in the general conviviality.

A warning voice, whose low accents were audible amid all the din, seemed to whisper that he had not long to live. He did not dare to raise his eyes, lest he should read in characters of fire that his kingdom would be taken from him. That he almost fancied the terrible writing was there.

Like Jahe, he had descryed Father Sylvius amid the crowd in the hall, and the unlooked-for and unseasonable appearance of the friar awakened a train of gloomy thought, that quickly deepened, as we have described. A mortal sickness seized the King, and he felt he could not shake it off; but, unwilling to alarm the company, he called for wine, hoping a good draught might restore him.

His accents startled Jane, who now for the first time remarked the deathly pallor that had bespread his features. She would have instantly obeyed the command, but the flagon she held was well-nigh empty.

At this moment, Catesby interposed. The opportunity he sought to execute his direful purpose had now arrived. It came suddenly, but he was prepared.

"Here is a goblet of his Majesty's favourite wine of Chalosse," he said.

"Give it me!" cried Jane, almost snatching the cup from him in her anxiety to serve the King.

"Here is that which will revive you, sire," she said, as she handed him the cup.

Edward drank deeply of the poisoned draught; and as Catesby watched him, he saw that the work was done.

For a few minutes the doomed monarch felt better, and those nearest him, who shared Jane's anxiety, thought he had rallied.

But the signs of improvement were fallacious, and, in reality, he was much worse. His pale cheek flushed, and his eye blazed, but it was with an unnatural lustre. He attempted to converse, but his speech was thick, and his voice hoarse, as if from intoxication. Indeed, Buckingham and Hastings, who were well aware of his intemperate habits, attributed his condition to excess.

But Jane knew otherwise. Being close to him, she whispered in his ear,—

"You are unwell, sire—very unwell! I pray you retire from the banquet."

Feeling the advice was good, Edward immediately endeavoured to comply with it.

As he arose from his seat, not without great difficulty—the nobles on either side of him rose likewise, and at this night the utmost consternation prevailed among the assemblage.

The din of revelry instantly ceased, wine-cups raised to the lip were set down un-

tasted, and the strains of the minstrels were hushed.

But the alarm was only momentary, the company being quickly reassured by the Duke of Buckingham, who, by Edward's command, called out,—

"His Majesty is compelled, by slight indisposition, to withdraw from the banquet; but it is his royal pleasure that no interruption take place in it. The King hopes to return before the close of the feast. Meanwhile, he drinks to you all."

At this announcement, the whole assemblage arose, and bowing around, the King drained the fatal cup.

Amid the murmurs of applause that followed, Edward retired, leaning on Jane's shoulder, and attended by Hastings and half-a-dozen pages, and proceeded slowly towards his own apartments.

The banquet went on as merrily as before the interruption, but the King did not return.

After an hour or so, gentlemen ushers went round the tables, and, with grave looks, informed the guests that his Majesty was seriously ill. Thereupon, the assemblage immediately dispersed.

Great confusion ensued, but while the guests were departing, Father Sylvius found his way to the corridor, and, without being questioned, proceeded along it to the King's private apartments.

VIII.

WHAT OCCURRED AT THE KING'S DEATH-BED.

IN a magnificent chamber of the palace, hung with finest arras, and lighted by a dim lamp, in a state bed, with tester and ceiling of cloth of gold, having heavy embroidered curtains, and a counterpane furred with ermine, propped up by pillows, lay the royal Edward.

Immediately after the King's seizure at the banquet, Jane had laid aside her disguise, and resumed her own attire, and was now watching by the slumbering monarch's couch.

On his removal to the chamber where we find him, Edward had been seized by violent sickness, after which he seemed somewhat better, and showed a strong disposition to sleep. Dr. Lewis, his physician, regarded this as a good sign, and declared, if he slept well throughout the night, he might recover—otherwise he would never rise from his couch.

Before resigning himself to sleep, the King expressly enjoined that Mistress Shore, and no other, should watch by his couch, and the command was strictly obeyed.

Every precaution being taken to ensure quiet, Edward slept throughout the greater part of the night, not calmly, but heavily, while the groans that occasionally broke from him showed he was troubled by painful dreams. So distressing were these sounds to hear, that Jane almost felt inclined to disobey the physician's orders, and wake him.

It was now the third hour of morn, and Jane was still anxiously watching by the

couch—sometimes kneeling and praying for the royal sufferer.

Her thoughts passed through her breast during this long, painful vigil. The end of her happiness seemed come, for she could not persuade herself that the King would recover. Indeed, as she gazed at him, she felt sure he could not live long.

While thus alternately watching and praying, she heard the door softly open, and Doctor Lewis came noiselessly in.

A man of middle age, with a grave cast of countenance, rendered graver than usual by the present circumstances, the physician had a somewhat spare figure, and was clothed in a long, dark gown, edged with fur, above which he wore a furred cape. His long locks were covered by a black velvet skull-cap.

Stopping in the middle of the apartment, he signed Jane to come to him, and a few whispered words passed between them.

"Has my royal patient slept throughout the night?" inquired Doctor Lewis.

"Uninterruptedly, as you see him now," replied Jane.

"That is well!" said the physician. "Let him sleep on. When he awakens, I shall be able to decide."

With this, he stepped towards the couch, and gazed for some minutes on the slumbering monarch.

Apparently, the inspection satisfied him; for he gave Jane a reassuring look, and quitted the room.

Overcome by fatigue and anxiety, Jane soon afterwards fell into a sort of doze, from which she was aroused by a slight touch on the shoulder, and looking up, she perceived Father Sylvius standing beside her.

"You here!—and at this moment!" she exclaimed, in a low voice, so as not to disturb the King, whose heavy breathing could be distinctly heard.

"'Tis the very moment when I might be expected," rejoined Father Sylvius. "I must speak to the King."

"You shall not approach his couch!" she cried, placing herself between him and the sleeping monarch.

"Stand aside, woman!" cried the friar, authoritatively.

Unable to disobey the injunction, she retreated in terror to the side of the room.

Advancing to the couch, Father Sylvius laid his hand on Edward's shoulder.

For a moment, the King did not stir; but at length he opened his eyes, and fixed them upon the intruder.

"Who art thou?" demanded Edward.

"Dost thou not know me?" rejoined the monk.

And throwing back his hood, he disclosed a well-remembered face.

"'Tis Alban Shore!" said the King.

"Ay, 'tis that much-injured man," rejoined the friar.

"I confess I have wronged thee," said Edward, feebly; "but I will make amends."

"Thou canst not make me amends," rejoined Shore. "As David took Bath-Sheba, the wife of Urijah, the Hittite, so thou hast taken my wife from me."

Edward answered with a groan.

"I would thou hadst slain me with the sword, as David slew Urijah," pursued Shore; "then had I been spared many years of misery! Hearken to me, oh, King! In this dread hour, when thy life is drawing to a close, and when nought can save thee, thou repentest thee of the great wrong thou hast done; but thy repentance comes too late."

"No; not too late!" murmured Jane.

"Heaven is always merciful!"

"Who spoke?" said Edward.

"She whom thou hast destroyed," replied Shore. "But neither she nor thou art penitent, and both shall perish!"

"Say what thou wilt to me," cried Jane, "but torment not the King!"

"Back, woman!" exclaimed Shore, fiercely. "Thy place is no longer here. Thy days of sinful pleasure are over. Henceforth thou wilt be shunned; for the arm that has shielded thee will soon be powerless, and those who praised thee will revile thee. Vainly wilt thou flee. Thou canst not escape from the punishment that awaits thee. A curse will cling to thee, and hold thee fast!"

Half-stunned, Jane looked at him in terror but could not speak.

"Call the guard!" cried Edward.

"Ay; call the guard!" said Shore. "Complete thy work, and cause me to be put to death. I care not. I have had my revenge."

"As thou dost hope for mercy thyself, show some mercy to me!" implored Jane.

"My heart is adamant," rejoined Shore. "There is pity in it neither for thee nor for the King."

"Oh," exclaimed Jane, "this is too much!"

And she sank down insensible at the foot of the couch.

"Wretch! thou hast killed her!" cried Edward.

"No; she will revive presently," said Shore. "But it were better for her that she died now than hereafter. She will have to drain the cup of misery to the dregs."

"How knowst thou this, thou prophet of evil?" said the King.

"How do I know it?" cried Shore. "Because I have prayed that it may be so, and my prayer will be granted! She whom thou hast fed with the choicest viands, and clothed with the richest attire, will die of starvation, and almost without regret! A ban will be upon her! No one will aid her!—all will shun her! Thus will the great King's favourite perish!"

"At least, thou shalt perish before her!" cried Edward.

And raising himself with great difficulty, he called out, "Without there! Hoi!"

The effort was too much, and he fell back on the pillows.

IX.

THE KING'S LAST GIFTS TO JANE.

IN answer to the King's summons, Doctor Lewis, accompanied by half a dozen pages, rushed into the room.

"What would your Majesty?" cried the physician.

"Seize on that friar!" said Edward. "Deliver him to the guard."

"No friar is here, my liege," replied the physician, thinking the King was delirious.

"Can he have vanished?" cried Edward, gazing round, and unable to discern his tormentor.

"No one has entered the room, my liege, or gone forth—of that I am certain," said the physician. "I have been in the ante-chamber throughout the night."

"It must have been the fiend in person," said Edward.

"Doubtless, your Majesty has been troubled by a dream," said the physician, confirmed in his notion that the King was light-headed.

"It may be so," said Edward. "Ha! here is the proof that it was real," pointing to Jane, who had been partly concealed by the hangings of the bed. "Get restoratives quickly."

"I have all that is needful with me, sire," replied Dr. Lewis.

And kneeling down beside Jane, he raised her head, and allowing her to breathe at a smelling-bottle which he produced, she quickly regained consciousness. He then assisted her to a seat.

"Clear the room," said Edward, in a low voice, to Doctor Lewis. "I have something to say to you."

And at a sign from the physician, all the pages went forth.

"Shall I go likewise, sire?" said Jane.

"No," replied Edward. "Stay with me a little longer."

It was a dread moment.

The physician's hand was upon the King's pulse. His eye was upon the King's countenance.

Jane watched him with intense anxiety, but she could read nothing in his impassive features.

At length the examination was over, and the King, who had remained perfectly calm, said to the physician,—

"Let me know my fate."

"Sire," replied the physician, gravely, "I will not attempt to conceal from your Majesty that there is great danger—"

"I understand," said Edward, seeing that he hesitated to proceed. "You can give me no hope?"

"I would have your Majesty prepare for the worst," said Doctor Lewis, somewhat evasively.

During the pause that ensued, Jane vainly endeavoured to stifle her sobs.

The silence was broken by the King.

In a firm voice he said,—

"How many hours are left me? Fear not to tell me the truth."

"Sire," replied the physician, "unless some change takes place—of which I despair—you will not see another night."

The tone in which this dread announcement was uttered forbade all hope.

Unable to repress her anguish, Jane buried her face in her hands, and wept aloud.

"Leave me for a few minutes," said Edward to the physician.

"Constrain yourself, I pray you, sire, or you will abridge the little time left you," said Doctor Lewis.

"Jane!" said the King, as soon as they were alone.

She arose instantly, and stood by his side.

Taking her hand, and gazing at her with inexpressible tenderness, Edward said,—

"We must now part for ever, sweetheart."

"Our separation will not be long, sire," she replied, "I shall soon follow you."

"No, sweetheart," he said; "you must live. Be constant to my memory—that is all I ask."

"I cannot live without your Majesty," she cried, despairingly.

"You have never yet disobeyed me, Jane," he said; "and I am well assured you will not disobey my last injunction. Indulge not in unavailing sorrow, but think of the happy hours we have spent together, and of the love I have ever borne you. Methinks I have amply provided for you; but if you desire aught more, it shall be yours."

"You have already done too much for me, sire," she cried.

"Tis well. I signed that order on the Treasury to-day," pursued Edward. "Fail not to present it early in the morn to the Marquis of Dorset, and obtain the money. After my death, some difficulties may be raised. How is this? You look embarrassed!"

"Sire," she replied, "I must not conceal from you that the warrant you gave me is lost."

"Lost!" exclaimed the King. "Impossible!"

"Your Majesty may remember that I attended you to the door," said Jane. "When I came back, the warrant was gone, and I have not been able to find it since. But do not let the matter disturb you. I shall not require the money."

"Jane," cried the King, with a troubled look, "strange misgivings cross me. My designs to benefit you seem unaccountably thwarted. I see not why the warrant should be stolen, save from a mischievous motive, since it is useless to any other than yourself. To-morrow, if I live so long, the Lord Treasurer shall pay you the money. Meantime, take these," he added, giving her a splendid chain set with diamonds, and some other ornaments lying on a small table near the bed. "Take them, I insist," he added, forcing the articles upon her.

Just then the physician entered the room.

"Never wert thou so unwelcome!" cried Edward. "Yet, since you have come, bear witness that I have given these ornaments to Mistress Shore."

"Bear witness, also, that I receive them most reluctantly," said Jane; "and only do so because I would not willingly distress his Majesty."

"I shall not forget what I am told," rejoined the physician.

"Now that the moment for separation has arrived," cried Jane, "I feel I have left much unsaid, that I ought to say to your Majesty. Grant me a few more minutes, I beseech you, good Master Physician!"

"Be brief," then, madame, I implore you," said Doctor Lewis, removing to the further part of the room, so as to be out of hearing.

"If it be possible, sire," said Jane, addressing the King in a low, earnest voice, "to effect a sincere reconciliation between Lord Rivers and the Marquis of Dorset, and the Duke of Buckingham and the Lords Hastings and Stanley, it might prevent future troubles."

"It shall be done," rejoined Edward. "Unluckily, Lord Rivers is at Ludlow Castle with the Prince of Wales, but the Queen will answer for him. I will force the others to become friends."

"I scarce have courage to make the next suggestion, but I must not hesitate. Appoint the Queen Regent during Prince Edward's minority, sire. She will govern wisely and well."

"I doubt it not," rejoined the King. "But Gloucester must be Lord Protector."

"No, sire!" said Jane. "Let Gloucester have no authority!"

"You hate him!" said the King.

"I hate him because he is false to your Majesty, and seeks to mount the throne. Give the Queen full power, and she will be able to guard the Prince against his perfidious uncle—not otherwise."

"It shall be so," replied Edward. "If all this can be accomplished, I shall die in peace; but I feel my strength is fast failing me."

Fearing, from his words, that he was sinking, Jane called to the physician, who flew to the couch. But the King quickly rallied.

"You must not remain with me longer, Jane," he murmured. "Farewell—farewell for ever!"

She felt as if her heart would break; but, restraining herself by a powerful effort, she stooped down, kissed him, and quitted the room.

How she regained her own apartments she knew not, for she seemed to be in a state of stupefaction.

Seeing her condition, her female attendants induced her to lie down, and she soon fell into a profound slumber, from which she did not waken until mid-day.

Her first inquiries were for the King, and she learnt the terrible truth from the looks of her attendants, who vainly strove to conceal it from her.

X.

HOW KING EDWARD'S BODY WAS EXPOSED TO PUBLIC VIEW ON THE DAY OF HIS DEATH, IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

ON a high catafalque, conspicuously placed in the centre of the nave at Westminster Abbey, and covered with a black velvet pall, edged with silver, and embroidered with the royal badges, the falcon and fetterlock, the rose and sun, and the white hart, lay the lifeless body of the King, who had only breathed his last at an early hour on the same day.

Bared to the waist, the nobly-proportioned frame of the deceased monarch looked as if sculptured in whitest marble, and was full of subdued dignity, repose, grace, and resignation, which gave to his features a peculiar charm.

Over the lower part of the person was thrown an ample cover of cloth of silver, and the head rested upon a large pillow of black satin fringed with silver. Even in death, the majestic features of the King retained their proud expression and beautiful outline.

Immense tapers of yellow wax, set in tall silver candlesticks, burnt at the corners of the catafalque. Youthful incense-bearers, swinging heavy censers, continually fumed the body. Dignitaries of the Abbey knelt around, and a solemn requiem was sung by the choir, while the deep tones of the organ ever and anon pealed along the vaulted roof.

From pillar to pillar, along the aisles, and in the transept, magnificent arras was stretched, so that a full view of the royal body could only be obtained from certain points indicated by gentlemen ushers provided with white wands.

Yoomen of the guard were likewise stationed at the entrance to the choir, and at the various chapels, to prevent intrusion; but the deportment of the crowd was singularly quiet and decorous.

Around the catafalque a clear space was kept by halberdiers, stationed some two feet apart, so as not to obstruct the view; the tallest and finest men being selected for the occasion.

Within the circle thus formed, and which was strictly guarded by the halberdiers, who crossed their pikes when needful, several distinguished personages were gathered; the chief among them being Lord Hastings, the Grand Chamberlain, by whom the solemn ceremonial was conducted, the Duke of Buckingham, and Lord Stanley, the Marquis of Dorset, Lord Gray, and the Queen's Chamberlain, Lord Dacre.

Besides these, there were the Lord Mayor, the sheriffs, and aldermen, in their full robes, and several of the important citizens, who had banqueted recently with Edward in the adjacent palace.

Another personage was likewise allowed a place within the circle, although his particular garments seemed out of character with the scene. This was Malbouche. The

jester, whose office was gone, wore a most rueful countenance, and perhaps no one among the assemblage more sincerely regretted his royal master than the poor knave.

All the nobles just mentioned were members of the Council—the Marquis of Dorset and Lord Gray, the Queen's sons by her first marriage, holding the chief places; and they had judged it expedient, in consequence of the suddenness of the King's death, that the body should be exposed in the manner described—first, to convince the somewhat incredulous populace that his Majesty was actually dead; and secondly, that he had come fairly by his end.

A like course had been pursued with regard to the unfortunate Henry VI, whose remains were exhibited in St. Paul's; but in that case, the murdered King was placed in a coffin, and covered up, so that the face alone could be distinguished. No requiem was then sang, and no sympathizing spectator was permitted to approach the mingled corpse, from which, it was said, blood burst forth.

On the present occasion every possible honour was paid to the departed monarch. Masses were performed, and dirges sung. Every countenance bespoke sorrow, for those who entertained other feelings did not dare to manifest them. If not deeply mourned, Edward was sincerely regretted. Whatever may have been his faults, he had won the regard of his subjects, and his popularity was at its zenith when he was prematurely cut off. Many a tearful glance was cast at his noble person. Many a prayer was breathed for the repose of his soul. If he had been a slave to his passions, and was sullied by many crimes, he had some redeeming qualities, and these were now remembered, and his evil deeds forgotten. He was thought of as a brave warrior and a magnificent monarch. That he had been cruel and rapacious could not be denied, but he had only slain his enemies, and confiscated their property—venial offences in the opinion of men who had lived during the sanguinary Wars of the Roses.

The regrets felt for the loss of the King were heightened by fears for the future,—great anxiety being felt in regard to the new Government. That the Queen would attempt to rule in the name of her youthful son, the Prince of Wales, no one doubted; but that she would long maintain sovereign sway seemed very questionable. Unfortunately for herself, Elizabeth had no party, except her own relatives, and certain new-made peers, who were detested by the old nobility, and disliked by the people.

While Edward lived, the Queen had been omnipotent, because he granted all her requests, and upheld her family. Deprived of his support, she had little authority. As we just intimated, her brother, the Earl of Rivers, and her son by her first marriage—the Marquis of Dorset and Lord Gray—were prominent members of the Council; but Buckingham,

Hastings, and Stanley, three most powerful nobles, were hostile to her, and it was certain she would have to contend with Gloucester, whose partisans were already at work, suggesting that she was not lawfully married to the King, and that her sons, being illegitimate, could not succeed to the Crown.

Such a prospect did not bode future tranquillity.

Another matter, likewise, occupied the crowd, and gave rise to much muttered discussion. The suddenness of the King's death excited suspicion that he had been poisoned at the grand banquet given by him only two days previously; but by whom, or at whose instigation, the deadly potion was administered, none ventured to affirm.

By common consent the Queen was entirely acquitted of any participation in the dark deed; but suspicion attached to Gloucester, who was likely to be the guinea by his royal brother's removal, and who was known to be capable of such an atrocious act.

Amongst those near the catafalque was a Franciscan friar, who had obtained admittance at the same time as Malbouche.

Kneeling down, he appeared to pray fervently for the departed monarch, but was not so much engrossed by his devotions as he seemed. He had contrived to place himself near Buckingham and Hastings, and a good deal of their discourse, though carried on in low tone, reached his ear. This was what he overheard.

"Before this hour to-morrow," said Buckingham, "the express whom I ordered to ride for his life will reach York, and the Duke of Gloucester will be made aware of the King's death. I have written to inform him, but that Rivers, Dorset, and Gray are certain to dispute his claim, inasmuch as the King, in his latest moments, appointed the Queen to be Regent, with full powers. I added that unless he can secure the custody of the young King, who is now at Ludlow Castle with his uncle, Lord Rivers, his Highness's chance of the Protectorship is irretrievably lost. I told him he might depend on our support, and that we can offer him a corps of a thousand soldiers, well armed, and ready to march at a moment's notice."

"His Highness must not lose time," replied Hastings. "I have ascertained that the Queen has despatched a courier to Lord Rivers, with tidings of the King's death, enjoining his lordship to levy troops immediately in Wales, to enable him to conduct his royal nephew safely to London for the Coronation."

"Ere the young King can reach London he must be in Gloucester's hands, or we are lost," observed Buckingham significantly. "But how came Edward to give the Queen uncontrolled authority? He always declared that Gloucester should be Protector."

"And Gloucester would be Protector now," replied Hastings. "had not Mistress Shore induced the dying King to appoint her Majesty Regent."

"By acting thus injudiciously, Mistress Shore will make a mortal enemy of Gloucester, and gain nothing for the Queen," remarked Buckingham.

"To do her justice, I believe her motives were good," said Hastings.

"Now that the King has gone, her power has departed from her," said Buckingham, "But, no doubt, she has enriched herself."

"Tis her own fault if she has not," rejoined Hastings. "But she is really disinterested, and I incline to think she has not availed herself of the many opportunities offered her of becoming wealthy. However, the influence she enjoyed is gone, as she will speedily discover. Suitors will no longer throng her ante-chamber—courtiers will shun her."

"Tis a hard fate, I must own, to be raised to such an eminence, and then cast down," observed Buckingham. "But Mistress Shore can go back to her husband, if he is still in existence."

"No; that is impossible!" said Hastings. "The crazy goldsmith has not been heard of since his wife left him."

Just then, perceiving the Lord Mayor, who had come up in the interim, he said to him,—

"Can your lordship inform me what has become of Alban Shore, the goldsmith?"

"That is a question I cannot answer," replied the other. "Possibly he may now reappear. Should he not do so, we may conclude him dead. But if he still lives he must be poor, for all his money was given away in charities. At one time I envied Shore his good fortune in gaining such a lovely wife, but I have since esteemed myself the luckier man; though had I been in his place I would not have taken her abandonment of me so much to heart."

"Perchance, you loved her not as well as Shore loved her, my lord," remarked Hastings. "But she had many suitors besides yourself, I remember."

"Very true," replied the Lord Mayor. "And strange to say, they were all at the last banquet given by the King—stranger still, they are all here to-day."

"The party would have been complete had Shore been present on the last occasion," observed Buckingham.

"Or were he here now," said the Lord Mayor. "Mistress Shore has lost none of her beauty. I know not how others feel, but for my own part I confess I am as much in love with her as ever."

"I would have been treason to make this avowal two days ago, my lord," said Buckingham. "But you may now succeed the King in her favour."

Before the Lord Mayor could make any reply, the friar, who seemed disturbed by the discourse, arose from his kneeling posture, and without raising his hood, said, in a hollow voice,—

"Alban Shore is not dead!"

"How knowst thou that?" demanded the Lord Mayor.

"No matter how I know it," replied the friar. "I affirm that Alban Shore still lives. But he is not likely to trouble his wife."

"Thou must give me precise information on this point at a more convenient season," observed the Lord Mayor.

"Willingly," replied the monk.

And bowing his head, he moved to a little distance.

Just then, the Marquis of Dorset came up, and without noticing either of the two nobles, who eyed him haughtily, said to the Lord Mayor,—

"It has just been decided by the Council, as no doubt your lordship has been given to understand, that the young King will be proclaimed to-morrow."

"Orders to that effect have already been given, my lord," replied the Lord Mayor; "and I will see them carried out in person. At noon to-morrow, King Edward the Fifth will be proclaimed at Paul's Cross, at the Cross at Cheapside, and at other public places. 'Tis too soon as yet, I suppose, to speak of the Coronation?"

"The Coronation will take place immediately after the arrival of his youthful Majesty in London," replied Dorset. "As soon as a sufficient escort can be provided, he will commence his journey from Ludlow Castle."

"I should have thought a very small escort would be required, my lord," said the Lord Mayor. "Against whom is his youthful Majesty to be defended?"

"Ay, who are his enemies?" demanded Hastings, sternly. "Not his brave and loyal uncle, the Duke of Gloucester; not the Duke of Buckingham, Lord Stanley, or myself, who are all devoted to him, and ready to lay down our lives in his defence. Methinks the guard is required to confirm the power of Lord Rivers, rather than to protect the young King."

"I care not what you think, my lord," rejoined Dorset, haughtily. "No precautionary measures will be neglected. The Queen is well aware that the Duke of Buckingham and yourself are in secret communication with the Duke of Gloucester."

"Does her Majesty distrust us?" demanded Buckingham.

"I do," replied Dorset. "Therefore, the young King will have an army to guard him. Forget not that I hold the Tower, and am head of the Council, in the absence of Lord Rivers. My Lord Mayor," he added to that dignitary, "the Queen counts upon your loyalty and devotion to the King, her son."

"Her Majesty may entirely rely on me, my lord," replied the Lord Mayor.

With a look of defiance at Buckingham and Hastings, the Marquis of Dorset then moved away.

"I thought a reconciliation had taken place between your lordships and the Queen's family," observed the Lord Mayor.

"We shook hands at the King's request, and vowed to be good friends, and this is the result," rejoined Buckingham. "Your lordship shall have a full explanation anon."

"I require no explanation, my lord," said the Lord Mayor. "I can see plainly enough what we may expect. My own course is clear. I shall side with neither party, but uphold King Edward the Fifth."

XI.

HOW KING EDWARD THE FOURTH WAS INTERRED IN SAINT GEORGE'S CHAPEL.

AFTER being exposed for nine hours to public gaze, the royal corpse was removed to a traverse, and robed in a long gown of purple cloth of gold. It was next placed in a large, open coffin, lined with white damask, and laid upon a bier before the high altar.

During the preparation for the latter part of the solemnity, the vast crowd collected within the nave and transepts was constrained to leave the Abbey.

A strange and awful circumstance occurred at the time. Sir William Catesby had been appointed by the Lord Chamberlain to superintend the removal of the royal corpse. The office was distasteful to him, but he could not refuse it. When he approached, the bearers trembled, for they thought that a frown passed over the dead King's countenance.

Appalled by the occurrence, which he himself had noticed, Catesby drew back, whereupon the King's visage resumed its serene expression.

Catesby was standing aloof, unable to shake off this superstitious terror, when Malbouche came up to him and said, "I trow, Sir William, you have heard of the ordeal of touch?"

"Wherefore the question?" demanded Catesby.

"I would fain see you lay your hand upon the King's body," said Malbouche. "Dare you do it?"

"Certes, I dare! What should hinder me? But I shall not do it to please thee."

"Again, I say, you dare not touch the body," cried Malbouche.

"Thou liest, knave!" exclaimed Catesby.

"To the proof, then!" said the jester.

Catesby stepped forward, with feigned boldness, but secret misgiving.

When he came up to the bier, the King's countenance again seemed to change, and the conscience-stricken villain shrank back.

"Said I not you would not touch the body?" cried Malbouche.

Catesby made no reply.

When the bier sustaining the royal coffin had been placed before the altar, which was bedecked up by tall tapers, twenty-four bannerets and knights, in long black gowns and hoods, ranged themselves on either side to keep watch.

A mass of *Requiem* was then performed by the Abbot of Westminster, while the nobles and gentlemen knelt around. *De profundis* was likewise said. During the office, Lord

Dacre offered for the Queen; the young Earl of Lincoln, son of the Duchess of Suffolk, Edward's sister, likewise offered; and many others, including Dorset, Buckingham, and Hastings.

The whole psalter was recited, and the solemn service lasted till an hour after midnight, when another mass of *Requiem* was performed.

The coffin was then closed and borne by the bannerets and knights through the choir, to the great porch, where a grand funeral car was waiting to receive it.

While the royal body was placed in the car, the bell of the Abbey began to toll, and a long procession was formed, comprising the monks, the Abbot, the Archbishop of York, who was likewise Chancellor, the chief nobles, with the Lord Mayor, the sheriffs and aldermen.

The funeral train was preceded by a mounted guard of archers, and yeomen of the guard, bearing torches. On either side of the funeral car walked the Marquis of Dorset, and the Lords Gray, Dacre, and Lincoln, holding the pall. A long train of nobles and gentlemen followed, walking two and two.

Seen by the light of the torches, as it shaped its slow course from the Abbey to the Palace stairs, where a barge was in readiness to convey the royal corpse to Windsor, the procession formed a most striking spectacle, and, despite the unseasonableness of the hour, was witnessed by an immense number of spectators, all of whom appeared greatly impressed.

The bell of the Abbey continued to toll throughout, but no trumpets were blown, nor was any other sound heard.

Deposited within the barge, which was draped with black velvet, and decked with the royal arms, the King's coffin was watched throughout its nocturnal transit by the bannerets and knights. Tapers burnt at the head and foot of the bier, and priests recited prayers.

With the conveyance thus assigned to the deceased monarch were five other state barges, all filled with various officials.

In the foremost of these, which preceded the royal body by a bow-shot, trumpeters were stationed, and their clarions were occasionally sounded to keep the river clear. The conduct of the ceremonial was entrusted by the Queen to her Chamberlain, Lord Dacre.

A short halt was made at Shene Palace, where all the royal attendants had come forth, with the seneschal, and loudly expressed their sorrow. But the most genuine manifestation of sorrow was made by Malbouche, who had been allowed by Lord Dacre to accompany the body of his royal master.

In the gray light of dawn, the royal corpse arrived at Windsor, and was at once conveyed to Saint George's Hall, where it lay in state for three days.

Subsequently, the King was interred in Saint George's Chapel, the funeral obsequies being conducted with great pomp.

A lady, attired in deepest mourning, whose

features were completely concealed by a thick veil, was conducted by Lord Dacre, to a place within the chapel not far from the royal body.

This lady, who was evidently overwhelmed by affliction, knelt down, and remained in a supplicating posture till the close of the ceremonial, when she was assisted from the chapel, almost in a fainting state, by the Queen's Chamberlain.

END OF BOOK THE FOURTH.

BOOK V.

THE ABBEY SANCTUARY.

I.

HOW JANE DEVOTED HERSELF TO THE QUEEN.

NEARLY a week had elapsed since Edward the Fourth was interred in Saint George's Chapel at Windsor.

Jane had been present at the funeral, as described; but on her return that night to her apartments in Westminster Palace, she was seized with a violent illness, that threatened to deprive her of life or reason.

Owing to the sedulous care of Doctor Lewis, the late King's physician, she recovered; and on the sixth day, though still feeling very weak, she was able to sit up.

Then, for the first time, she assumed her mourning habits; and these being of black velvet, edged with white silk, and embroidered with silver, contrasted strongly with the unwonted paleness of her complexion. But, though bearing evident traces of deep affliction, her features appeared almost more interesting than they had done before this heavy blow had fallen upon her.

She was alone, and seated in a cabinet, communicating with a larger apartment, in which she had often sat with the King, and was thinking of him, and of the many happy hours they had passed together.

Alas! these happy hours were gone—never to return! Deprived of him she had so deeply loved, she felt that life would henceforth be a blank; and she resolved to bury her woes in a convent, and seek to atone, by penance and prayer, for the faults she had committed.

She was still occupied by sad reflections—still thinking of the King—when a page entered, and said that a Franciscan friar was without, and prayed admittance, as he had somewhat of importance to communicate to her.

A feeling of misgiving crossed her at this announcement, but she ordered that the friar should be admitted.

When he came in, his hood was drawn over his face, so as to conceal his features, but she knew who it was.

As soon as the page had retired, the friar took a parchment from his gown, and placed it on the table beside her.

As he did this, he said to Jane, who watched him in surprise,—

"Here is the warrant for ten thousand marks given you by the King."

Without a word more, he was about to depart, but Jane stopped him.

"My errand is done," he said. "I would rather answer no questions."

"Yet tell me, I pray you, by whom the warrant was taken, and with what design?" she cried.

"I took it not—let that suffice!" rejoined the friar.

"My suspicions alight on Alice Fordham," cried Jane. "Did she take it?"

"Question me not, I repeat!" he said. "Thus much I will tell you freely. It was taken from vindictive motives, and not from desire of gain."

"What you say convinces me it was taken by Alice Fordham," rejoined Jane. "But I am perplexed to understand how the paper came into your hands!"

"No matter how I obtained it!" said the friar. "But for me, the warrant would have been destroyed. If you desire the money—and ten thousand marks is a large sum—I counsel you to apply for it without delay to the Marquis of Dorset, keeper of the late King's treasure, or he may not be able to pay the amount to you. The Duke of Gloucester, who is no friend of yours, may prevent him!"

"The Duke of Gloucester!" exclaimed Jane, in alarm. "Is he in power? I pray you tell me! All news has been kept from me during my illness, so that I really know nothing."

"Gloucester will soon be Lord Protector—rest assured of that!" rejoined the monk. "The young King is in his hands, and he is bringing his royal nephew to London for the Coronation."

Astonished by the intelligence, Jane sank back, and the friar quitted the room.

Shortly afterwards Doctor Lewis came in, and she eagerly questioned him.

"Is it true," she said, "that Lord Rivers has given up the young King to his evil-hearted, treacherous uncle, Gloucester? I cannot believe it!"

"'Tis true, nevertheless," rejoined the physician.

"And where is Buckingham?" cried Jane.

"With the Duke of Gloucester!" was the reply.

"I knew it!" cried Jane. "I knew he would be art and part in the treacherous scheme. And Lord Hastings—where is he?"

"In London, with the Council," replied Doctor Lewis. "But he is hostile to the Queen."

"Ay, he and Buckingham are her Majesty's implacable enemies," said Jane. "Oh, that I could help her in this emergency, when she has such powerful foes to contend with! Father and Lord Gray, with her?"

"Lord Gray was made prisoner by Gloucester at the same time as his uncle, Lord Rivers," replied the physician. "He had been sent to Ludlow Castle with a letter from the

Queen to her brother, bidding him dismiss all the young King's guards, and hasten to London with only his usual retinue. Lord Rivers imprudently complied with the injunction. Leaving all his armed men behind him, he set forth with his two nephews, the young King and Lord Gray, and a score of attendants. The hypocritical Gloucester, who had prepared this scheme by writing a submissive letter to the Queen, was waiting for them with a thousand men at Northampton. Lord Rivers and Lord Gray unsuspectingly fell into the snare; and accepting an invitation, brought them by Buckingham from the wily Gloucester, took the young King to Northampton, where they passed the night in festivity. Next morn, the two confiding nobles were arrested by their treacherous host, and sent, under a strong guard, to Pontefract Castle; while Gloucester, having fully succeeded in his design, seized upon his royal nephew."

"Unless the young King can be torn from the clutches of that remorseless tiger, he will be destroyed," cried Jane. "Gloucester has now made one successful step, and will never rest till he has mounted the throne. All hindrances will be swept aside by him. But the crown must be preserved for Edward's sons. Hear me, gracious Heaven!" she ejaculated, falling on her knees before a crucifix placed on one side of the room. "Grant, I implore Thee, that I may be the humble instrument of saving this young Prince from the great peril by which he is threatened! Grant that my efforts, inspired and directed from above, may avail to preserve for him his father's crown, which a usurper would snatch from his brow! Grant, O Heavenly Power! that I may be enabled to accomplish this; and when the task I desire to undertake is finished, I hereby solemnly vow to devote the remainder of my life to Thy service!"

Uttered with an earnestness and fervour that left no doubt of the sincerity of the suppliant, this prayer produced a strong effect upon a person who had entered the cabinet at the very moment when Jane knelt down, but would not come forward, being unwilling to interrupt her.

It was a tall, stately dame, of a very commanding presence, habited in magnificent frowning. On her brow was a white frontlet that covered her beautiful tresses, and on the lower part of her face was a plaited linen covering, called a barbe. Though her noble features looked sorrowful, it was sorrow mingled with pride and anger.

As soon as Jane became aware of the presence of her august visitor, she arose, and made a profound obeisance to her.

"I have come to you in my distress," said the widowed Queen, "and have heard enough to convince me that you will serve me and my sons, so far as lies in your power."

"That I will, gracious madam," replied she, earnestly. "I will lay down my life for you and them!"

"There is no one but yourself with whom I can take counsel, and on whom I can rely," pursued the Queen. "I am deprived of the help of my brother, Lord Rivers, and of my sons, the Marquis of Dorset, and Lord Gray. Rivers and Gray are prisoners, and Dorset cannot quit the Tower at this terrible juncture. Doubtless you are aware of the grave fault I committed in ordering Lord Rivers to dismiss the escort he had provided for the young King. But for that fatal error my son would now be here, and, with him in my own keeping, I should be able to set my enemies at defiance. The step taken by Gloucester is only part of a plan, the end of which is the destruction of all my children."

"Such is my own opinion, madame," observed Jane, mournfully.

"We are not safe within the Palace," pursued the Queen, "since I have no guard to defend me, should an attempt be made—as is most likely—to seize upon my second son, the Duke of York. Whither shall I fly?"

"I have advised her Majesty to take refuge with her children in the Abbey Sanctuary," observed Doctor Lewis. "But she hesitates, lest it should seem she is alarmed."

"The measure, though repugnant to your feelings, is absolutely necessary, gracious madame," urged Jane. "Yourself and your children will then be secure, for even Gloucester will not dare to violate a sacred asylum, the privileges of which have been recognised for centuries by Popes and Kings. Therefore you will be far safer in the Abbey Sanctuary than if you took refuge in the Tower with your son, the Marquis of Dorset, or in any other strong castle, where you might be besieged. Moreover, while you have the young Duke of York with you, the King is safe, for if the elder brother be put to death, the younger becomes King."

"You have convinced me," said the Queen. "I will take all my children at once to the Sanctuary. Nor will I stir thence till this danger be past."

"You have well resolved, madame," said the physician, approvingly.

"If you do not disdain my services, gracious madame, I would offer to accompany you," said Jane, "and I may be able to render you some little assistance. I will bring with me all the money and jewels I possess. They are yours."

"You make a great sacrifice," said the Queen; "and I fully appreciate it. I accept the offer, because I may need money, and I have little, and can obtain none from the Marquis of Dorset."

"Here is a warrant for ten thousand marks," said Jane, pointing to the paper. "Will it avail your Majesty?"

"This useless now," said the Queen; "yet keep it—better days may come."

"For me no better days can come," rejoined Jane, mournfully. "I have no desire left save to see your Majesty and your children righted. When that happens—as, with Heaven's grace

it will happen—I shall have done with the world."

"Begin me in the Sanctuary," said the Queen. "Bring with you such attendants as you need, and all matters you require. I will now go and give orders to my own servants to prepare at once for the removal."

"I will attend to your instructions, madame," said Jane, making a profound obeisance to the Queen, as her Majesty withdrew.

Seeing that Jane looked scarcely equal to the effort, the physician promised to return and help her, as soon as he had attended the Queen to her apartments.

II.

HOW THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK BROUGHT THE GREAT SEAL TO THE QUEEN.

"I MAKE IT KNOWN to all generations of the world after me, that, by special commandment of our holy father, Pope Leo, I have renewed and honoured the holy church of the blessed apostle, Saint Peter, at Westminster. And I order and establish for ever, that any person, of what condition or estate soever he be, from wheresoever he come, or for what offence or cause it be, if he shall take refuge in the said holy place, he be assumed of his life, liberty, and limbs. Moreover, I forbid, under pain of everlasting damnation, that any minister of mine, or of my successors, shall intermeddle with any goods, lands, or possessions of the said persons taking the said Sanctuary. For I take their goods and livelihood into my special protection, and, therefore, grant to every and each of them, inasmuch as my terrestrial power may suffice, all manner of freedom and joyous liberty. And whosoever shall presume or do contrary to this my grant, I ordain that he lose his name, worship, dignity, and power. And I will that this my grant, endure as long as there remaineth in England either love or dread of Christian name."

Such were the terms of the charter whereby the great privilege of Sanctuary, originally granted to the Abbey Church of Westminster by Sebert, King of the East Saxons, was confirmed by Edward the Confessor in the middle of the eleventh century.

From that date to the period of our story, the privilege continued in full force, and endured long afterwards, until its gross abuse necessitated entire suppression.

Nor was the privilege of Sanctuary confined merely to the Abbey, but extended to its precincts, within which the Abbot's Palace was included.

In this large monastic mansion, then some three centuries old, the unfortunate Queen was lodged.

Registered, with all her children, according to the customary form, as Sanctuary persons, she was now safe. It was not the first time she had been compelled by adverse circumstances to seek an asylum in the Abbot's Palace. Indeed, the young King, her son, was

born there, in 1470, when Edward was driven from the kingdom by Warwick.

Seated in a large, stone hall, panelled at one end with oak, and hung with arras, the Queen was watching her serving-men, who had been busily engaged throughout the night in bringing chests, coffers, and other articles to the Sanctuary.

The torches that illumined the hall showed a great quantity of chests and household stuff piled on the floor, and also revealed the sad figure of the widowed Queen, as she sat there alone.

Neither children nor attendants were with her. The young Duke of York and the five Princesses, his sisters, had long since retired to rest. Jane, also, who had followed the royal lady to the Sanctuary, and had stayed with her to a late hour, rendering all the assistance she could, had at last yielded to fatigue, and was now slumbering in a chair in another part of the hall.

The Queen would not quit her post, but sat there throughout the night, noting each chest as it was brought in and laid down before her.

She was wrapped in a black velvet robe; and her splendid tresses, being unbound, streamed over her shoulders.

On the table near which she sat were a lamp and a missal; but her eyes seldom rested on the book of prayer.

Thus the night had passed—one of the weariest and saddest nights the Queen had ever spent—and dawn was close at hand, when a noise outside roused her from the apathetic state in which she had sunk, and filled her with alarm. Who but an enemy could come there at that hour?

It was not an enemy, however, but a friend. It was the Archbishop of York, who was likewise Lord Chancellor, that entered the hall.

The palace of the Archbishop adjoined the Abbey, so he had not far to come. Short, however, as was the distance, he brought with him several armed attendants, and it was the noise they made, while stationing themselves at the door of the hall, that had alarmed the Queen.

An officer of the Archbishop's household followed his Grace, carrying a purple velvet bag, embroidered with the royal arms.

On recognising her visitor, the Queen arose, and received him with as much dignity as if she had been in her own palace.

"I did not think to see your Grace at this hour," she said. "But you are always welcome, and never more welcome than now, for I am sure you come to me as a friend."

"I bring you news that I trust will give you comfort, madame. Not half an hour ago I was awakened from my sleep by a messenger from Lord Hastings, who told me that your Majesty need be under no apprehension, for all would yet be well. Thereupon, I attired myself in haste, and came hither with the message."

"And does your Grace attach credit to it?" cried the Queen. "I believe nothing

that comes from Hastings. He is my deadly enemy, and seeks to destroy me and my children. He thinks by these false messages, sent through a friend so loyal and true-hearted as your Grace, that he will induce me to quit this asylum, and place myself in Gloucester's power, but I will disappoint him. Here I will stay until the King, my son, is crowned, and invites me to come forth from my refuge."

"I do not counsel you to leave the Sanctuary, gracious madame," rejoined the Archbishop. "But I think you judge Lord Hastings harshly. I admit he is not your friend, but he was devoted to the King, your husband, and his zeal and attachment are now transferred to the young King, your son. Rest assured he would not harm your children."

"He is the chief accomplice in this plot with Gloucester to deprive my son of the crown," said the Queen. "He has selected your Grace as his messenger, because he knows the great confidence I have in you, and the great respect in which I hold you. But tell him that I doubt him—nay more, that I know him to be false and treacherous. Bid your attendant retire for a moment, for I have somewhat to say to you in private."

At a sign from the Archbishop, the officer retired to a short distance, so as to be out of hearing.

"What would you say to me, madame?" asked the Archbishop.

"I believe Gloucester will kill the King, my son," she rejoined, in a low, deep voice.

"I cannot penetrate Gloucester's designs, madame," rejoined the Archbishop; "but the dark deed would avail him little. Were the King your son, murdered to-day, to-morrow I would crown his brothers, the Duke of York."

"I see your Grace is truly loyal," cried the Queen.

"Your Majesty shall have unquestionable proof of my fidelity," said the Archbishop.

Then, signing to the officer to come forward, he bade him place the embroidered velvet bag upon the table.

"Lo! there, madame," said his Grace,—"there is the Great Seal of England, the badge of regal power, without which nothing of moment in state affairs can be done. The King, your husband, gave me the seal, and I hereby return it to you. Keep it for King Edward's sons, and secure their right. Could stronger proof of my loyalty and devotion be given, I would give it."

"My lord, you have done enough," replied the Queen, in accents of heartfelt gratitude. "You have raised fresh hopes in my breast. With Heaven's aid I shall yet triumph over my enemies."

"Doubt it not, gracious madame," replied the Archbishop. "It gladdens me that I have brought consolation to your anxious breast. Seek some repose, I entreat you. You need it much. Later on in the day we will confer together again. Till then, farewell."

"I pray your Grace to give me your blessing ere you go," said the Queen.

And as she bent down, the Archbishop stretched his arms over her, and exclaimed fervently,—

"Heaven bless your Majesty, and guard you and your children from all ill!"

As the Queen arose, he quitted the hall with his attendants.

No sooner was he gone than the Queen clapped her hands.

The sound awoke Jane, who sprang from the chair on which she had slept, and flew towards her.

"What would your Majesty?" she cried.

"Bring that bag to my chamber. It contains the Great Seal of England."

"Is the seal for your younger son?" asked Jane.

"Time will show," replied the Queen.

III.

THE ABBOT OF WESTMINSTER.

JANE occupied a small chamber situated in the upper part of the Abbot's Palace, and looking down upon a beautiful little flower garden adjoining the inner court.

Being greatly fatigued, she did not rise till late, and had just attired herself, when, hearing voices beneath, she went to the window, which had been thrown open by her attendant.

On one side of the secluded little garden rose the gray monastic mansion—on the other, the buttresses and pinnacles of the Abbey.

A more charming retreat cannot be conceived, and in it the Abbot was wont to spend many hours in each day, but he now left it to the Queen and her family.

In this little garden, shut round by high stone walls, but still trim, and well kept, the royal children were collected.

Apparently the youthful captives were not much cast down, for their voices sounded cheerfully, and occasionally a light laugh was heard.

On looking forth, Jane perceived the Duke of York playing with his younger sisters, and chasing them along the narrow gravel walks.

Near a sun-dial, placed in the centre of the trim parterre, stood the Princess Elizabeth and the Princess Cicely. The countenances of both these lovely damsels had a sad expression.

All the party were in mourning.

Jane watched the scene with great interest—an interest deepened by the anxiety she felt for the safety of the young Prince, who seemed unconscious of any danger.

After sporting with his younger sisters for some time, the Duke of York came up to the two Princesses standing near the sun-dial, and asked them if they would not play with him.

Both declined, and told him he had had sufficient pastime.

"I would the King, my brother, were here to play with me!" he said.

"I would he were, for then he would be out of the power of our cruel uncle, the Duke of Gloucester," remarked the Princess Elizabeth. "I fear we shall never behold our dear brother again."

"Should Gloucester kill him, I shall be King, and then I will put Gloucester himself to death," cried the young Duke.

"It would be far better if we could find some means of delivering Edward from our uncle's power," said the Princess Cicely.

"Why does not Edward try to escape, and come to us?" cried the Duke of York.

"The attempt would be useless. He is too strictly guarded," replied the Princess Elizabeth. "Take care you never get into our uncle Gloucester's hands, Richard, or he will shut you up in the Tower."

"He cannot force me hence!" said the young Duke. "And the Lord Chancellor has given the Queen the Great Seal, without which nothing can be done."

"Alas! the Lord Chancellor has sent for it back!" said Elizabeth.

"But surely the Queen refused to give it up?" cried the young Duke. "I would not have returned it."

"Her Majesty judged otherwise, and she knows best," said Elizabeth, sadly. "But be it for good or ill, the Great Seal is gone."

This was news to Jane, and it greatly distressed her. She could neither account for the Queen's imprudence, nor understand why the Archbishop of York should have acted thus.

But she was much more alarmed by what presently occurred.

The young Duke and his sisters had resumed their play, when the Abbot of Westminster, attended by three or four monks, entered the garden.

On seeing him, the Duke of York immediately stopped in his sport, and made the Abbot a low reverence.

"I am sent to conduct your Highness to the Queen, your mother," said the Abbot. "The Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury is with her Majesty."

"My mind misgives me, holy father!" interposed the Princess Elizabeth. "Methinks the Cardinal has come to take away my brother?"

"Tis true, Princess," rejoined the Abbot.

"But I will not go with him," cried the Duke of York, resolutely.

"What the Queen, your mother, enjoins, your Highness will do, knowing it to be for the best. Of that I am firmly persuaded," said the Abbot. "Your royal uncle, the Duke of Gloucester, having been appointed Protector by the Council, and having the care and guardianship of the King, deems it improper that two brothers, hitherto brought up together, should be separated, and he has therefore sent to the Queen demanding that you be delivered up, and brought to the King."

"your brother, who is most wishful to have you with him. Your Highness will then be at liberty, whereas you are now in prison, and the Lord Protector and the Council hold it dishonourable to the King and to yourself that you should continue to remain in this Sanctuary."

"I will answer for my brother, holy father!" said the Princess Elizabeth. "It can be no dishonour to the King or the Duke of York that the Duke should be with his mother, and in an asylum where he is safe from his enemies. Would to heaven the King, my brother, were with us! I should then feel far easier than I do now!"

"My errand, Princess, is to conduct the Duke to the Queen," replied the Abbot. "If you and the Princesses, your sisters, choose to come with us, you will learn her Majesty's decision."

With this he took the young Duke's hand, and led him out of the garden.

The Princess Elizabeth and her sisters followed—all looking very sad, and the three youngest weeping.

The monks brought up the rear of the little procession.

Guessing whither they were going, Jane hurried down a circular stone staircase, and reached the great hall before them.

IV.

HOW THE QUEEN DELIVERED UP THE DUKE OF YORK TO CARDINAL BOURCHIER AND THE LORDS.

At the upper end of the large chamber, which was still encumbered with chests and household goods, sat the Queen.

Her Majesty was conferring with Cardinal Bourchier, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was accompanied by Lord Howard, and several other nobles.

The Cardinal had a very imposing presence, the effect of which was heightened by his rich attire and hat. His person was large, and his features strongly marked and characterized rather by pride than benignity.

A long and angry discussion had taken place between his Eminence and the Queen, in which the Cardinal, partly by persuasion, partly by menace, strove to induce her to deliver up her son.

"Madame," said the Cardinal, finding it impossible to move her, "I am but a messenger, with these lords, to ascertain your pleasure. You have branded us all with disloyalty and treachery, and have imputed a most execrable design to the Lord Protector. For ourselves, we can avouch that we are loyal and true to the young Prince your son; and we dare avouch, also, that the Lord Protector is equally true to his royal nephew, and means him no harm by removing him from this Sanctuary, and placing him with the King, his brother, but much good. Madame, I have done, and pray you to come to a speedy decision."

These words, and the tone in which they were uttered, produced a great effect upon the Queen, and shook her firmness.

She knew not how to act for the best. She did not for a moment believe that the Cardinal and the lords with him, though hostile to herself, would be accessory to the destruction of her son; but she feared the Protector.

Still, if Gloucester were resolved to violate the Sanctuary, and take away the young Duke by force, she could not prevent him; since opposition would be useless, she judged it the wisest course to yield.

At this painful juncture, the Abbot entered the hall with the young Duke, followed by the Princesses.

On beholding her son, the Queen immediately arose, and went to meet him.

Disengaging himself from the Abbot, the Prince flew towards her. She caught him in her arms, and covered him with kisses.

"You will not let them take me away, dearest mother," he said.

She strained him to her breast; and the young Duke, becoming alarmed, repeated the question.

"There is no help. You must go, my sweet son," replied the almost heart-broken mother.

"Were I to keep you here, the Lord Protector would take you hence by force."

"I did not expect this," murmured the Duke.

The younger Princesses had now come up, and hearing what the Queen said, gathered round their brother.

"Since you must go, we will go with you," they said.

"No, no; stay with the Queen, our mother, and comfort her," rejoined the Duke. "Distress not yourself on my account, dearest mother," he added, to the Queen. "Perhaps no harm may happen to me."

"Thy youth and innocence ought to guard thee, my sweet son," said the Queen. "Bid farewell to thy sisters."

The young Duke then tenderly embraced them all; and the scene was so touching, that even the Cardinal and the lords, though well pleased that their mission was accomplished, were moved by it.

"Something tells me we shall not meet again on earth, sweet brother," said little Bridget, as she kissed the Duke; "but we shall meet in heaven."

The Queen had need of all her fortitude to sustain herself at this trying juncture.

Taking her son by the hand, she led him towards those who were waiting for him.

They bowed as he approached; and the young Prince gracefully returned the salutation, bending with especial reverence to the Cardinal.

"My Lord Cardinal, and you, my lords," said the Queen; "I now deliver my son to your keeping. I am confident of your fidelity to him; for I know you will not betray the trust reposed in you by the King, his father."

Before Heaven and man, I shall require my son again at your hands."

Howard and the other lords made no reply to this address, but simply bowed. Cardinal Bouchier, however, who was much moved by it, said, "Rest easy, madame. I will answer for your son's safety."

She then turned towards the young Duke, and after regarding him for a few moments with inexpressible affection, kissed him, and said,—

"Farewell, my beloved son! All good angels guard thee! Let me kiss thee again ere we part, for Heaven only knows when we shall meet again!"

Once more she pressed him to her heart—once more she kissed him, and blessed him fervently.

But the young Prince clung to her, and besought her not to send him away.

Gently detaching his hold, the agonized mother delivered him to Cardinal Bouchier, who advanced to take him from her.

Unconscious that they were conducting the youthful victim to be sacrificed by his blood-thirsty uncle, who was waiting for him in the Star Chamber, the lords rejoiced at their success, and cared nothing for the unhappy Queen's anguish.

Just as he was about to quit the hall, the young Duke of York looked back, and beheld his mother, with her eyes streaming, and hands clasped, and looking the very picture of despair. His sisters were gathered round her.

He bade them farewell in his heart, and it was a last farewell.

V.

HOW THE MARQUIS OF DORSET TOOK REFUGE IN THE SANCTUARY.

THREE days after the removal of the young Duke of York, another event occurred calculated to heighten the unhappy Queen's anxiety.

The Marquis of Dorset, her eldest son by her first husband, who had hitherto filled the high offices of Constable of the Tower and keeper of the royal treasures, sought refuge in the Abbey Sanctuary.

When he presented himself to the Queen, she refused to embrace him, and reproached him bitterly with deserting his post, telling him he ought to have held the Tower to the last.

"So long as that fortress was in our power, there was hope for us," she said. "Now there is none."

"Hear how I have been circumstanced, ere you condemn me, madame!" replied Dorset. "Within the last two days I have lost all control in the Tower. Deprived of my offices by Gloucester, who has seized upon the royal treasures, and appropriated them to his own use, I could not enforce obedience from the men composing the garrison, and had I not been concealed in the Wardrobe Tower, by a servant who contained faithful

to me, and who subsequently enabled me to escape, I should have been lodged in a dungeon, and, ere long, brought to the block. Even when I got out of the Tower I was not safe, for the river-swains with barks filled with armed men, on the look-out to arrest our partisans, and prevent any of them from gaining this Sanctuary."

"Ah! dear son, I no longer blame you," cried the Queen. "Heaven be praised, you have escaped! From what you say I conclude Gloucester is now in the Tower?"

"He occupies the Palace with his retainers," replied Dorset, "and acts as if he were invested with supreme authority; as you may judge, when he styles himself, 'Brother and Uncle of Kings, Protector and Defender, Great Chamberlain, Constable, and Lord High Admiral of England.' While I was hidden in the Wardrobe Tower, I learnt that the King, your son, and his brother, the Duke of York, are shut up by the usurper in some private apartments of the Palace, where none are allowed to see them."

"Alas! alas!" exclaimed the Queen. "I much fear they will never come forth again!"

"I can offer you no comfort, madame," said Dorset, "for I share your worst fears. Both your sons are now completely in Gloucester's power, and it is not likely he will part with his prey."

"Have we no friends left to help us in this dire extremity?" cried the Queen. "The King was adored in the City. Will not the citizens rise to defend his sons?"

"Madame, as I understand, the whole city of London has been greatly troubled by these occurrences, and many loyal citizens took up arms, demanding that the young Princes should be shown to them; but they were prevailed upon by Hastings, who has much influence with the Lord Mayor and the aldermen, to retire to their own homes. Thus all hope of assistance from that quarter is at an end."

"Hastings has ever been my enemy," cried the Queen. "Next to Gloucester himself I fear him most."

"And with good reason," said Dorset.

At this juncture, Doctor Lewis entered the hall. He seemed surprised to find the Marquis of Dorset there, and expressed his great satisfaction at his lordship's escape from the Tower.

"I will frankly confess that I never thought to behold you again, my lord!" he said; "for I am well aware that Gloucester intended your destruction, and I marvel you have been able to escape from him. You are more fortunate than your brother, Lord Gray, and your uncle, Lord Rivers."

"What of them?" cried the Queen, anxiously. "Nay, do not hesitate, good doctor. I have had so many griefs of late, that I am able to bear more."

"I thought the sad news must have reached you, madame, or I should not have spoken of

"it," said the physician. "Thus, then, it is. Sir Richard Ratcliffe, whom you know to be a great favourite with Gloucester, and ever ready to execute his master's behests, has entered Pontefract Castle, at the head of a large party of men, and seized upon Lord Rivers, Lord Gray, Sir Thomas Vaughan, and Sir Richard Hawse."

"I guess what follows," said the Queen.

"Without trial, without sentence," pursued the physician, "they were dragged into the outer court, where their heads were stricken off in the presence of a vast number of spectators, who were told they were traitors, and had conspired with the Queen to destroy the Duke of Gloucester and his cousin, the Duke of Buckingham, and the old royal blood of the realm."

"My brother and my uncle slain!" cried Dorset. "Where will this blood-thirsty tyrant stop?"

"Not till he has slain us all!" said the Queen. "My turn may come next, or yours, my son! Heaven only knows! I thought I could bear the weight of any fresh calamity that might fall upon me, but my strength fails me. Support me to my chamber, Dorset, and do you come with me, good Master Physician, for I may need your aid."

She then quitted the hall, leaning upon her son, and attended by Doctor Lewis.

VI.

BY WHOM JANE WAS INDUCED TO QUIT THE SANCTUARY.

On the same day, but at a later hour, Jane was in the Abbey cloisters, and was pacing to and fro, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, when she became aware that some one was approaching, and, looking up, she beheld Lord Hastings.

After respectfully accosting her, he said,—

"Till this morning I was not aware you had taken refuge in the Sanctuary. Had you consulted me I should have advised you to remain in your apartments in the Palace. Here you are shut out from all the enjoyments of life, and from all pleasant intercourse with your friends. In effect, you are a prisoner, since you cannot stray far beyond these cloisters. Let me take you hence. I have interest enough with the Lord Protector to shield you from all harm, and save your property from confiscation."

"I doubt not your offer is made in good faith, my lord," she rejoined, "but the Protector can do me little injury. I care not for the confiscation of my goods. I have more money with me than I need. I shall never again take part in the gaieties and pleasures of the world, so that to be shut up here is no punishment to me. As speedily as may be, it is my intention to retire to a convent."

"I might applaud your resolution," said Hastings, "if I thought you were called upon to sacrifice yourself thus. But I see no reason for it. So far from your charms being on the wane, you have not yet reached the meridian of your beauty. When your grief has abated

you will reappear, looking more lovely than ever. No, madame, it must not be. The disappearance of a star so brilliant would leave a blank in the firmament."

"My lord," she replied, coldly, "all you can say will fail to move me."

"Yet listen to me!" he said, assuming a more urgent manner. "Circumstances compel me to avow my feelings sooner than I intended. The obloquy you would bury in a convent have produced a great impression upon me. I love you passionately—nay, I have long loved you, though, during the King's lifetime, I controlled my passion. Now I can speak freely. From me you will meet with the same devotion you met with from Edward—more, perhaps—for I will live only for you. Again I pray you, let me take you back to the Palace, which, as I have said, you ought never to have quitted."

"No, my lord," she replied; "I will never leave this place, except, as I have told you, for a convent."

"This is madness!" cried Hastings, unable to control his impatience. "As your friend, I am bound to prevent you from carrying this fatal resolution into effect. You are too young, too fair, too captivating, to retire from the world at present. Come with me."

"Hold, my lord!" said Jane, as if struck by a sudden idea. "Before I consent to return with you to the Palace, I must have your promise that you will act as I desire."

"I will do whatever you enjoin," he replied.

"You pledge your knightly word to this?" she said.

"I do," he replied, earnestly. "Are you now content?"

"I am content to trust you," she rejoined.

"Come, then!" he cried, hurrying her along the cloister.

They had not proceeded far, when the Queen, attended by the Marquis of Dorset and Doctor Lewis, issued from the ambulatory on the right.

For a moment, her Majesty looked as if she doubted the evidence of her senses; but as Jane stopped to address her, she said, in a haughty tone, "Pass on!"

"Grant me a word, madame, ere I depart," said Jane.

"What?" exclaimed the Queen, in increased astonishment. "Are you about to quit the Sanctuary?—and with Lord Hastings?"

"She is, madame," replied Hastings. "She is already wearied of it."

"Dissuade me not unheard, gracious madame," said Jane. "I shall be able to satisfy you."

"I am already satisfied you have deceived me," said the Queen, "and no explanation you can give will induce me to change my mind. With this powerful friend, you have secured an asylum, as you call it, in this asylum. Lord Hastings will protect you."

"I have already promised to do so, madame," said Hastings.

THE KING'S LAST BANQUET. (See page 94.)



"A word will convince you of the injustice you do me, madame," said Jane.

"Hear what she has to say, I beseech you, madame!" said Doctor Lewis, struck by Jane's manner.

"Speak, then!" said the Queen, laughing. On this, the others moved away to a short distance, leaving Jane and the Queen together.

"My motive for leaving this asylum is to serve you, madame," said Jane.

"Serve me! How?" cried the Queen.

"I know not in what way, madame, for I am acting on a sudden impulse; but I am persuaded I can be more useful to you if I am at liberty than here. Should I fail in my endeavours, hold me excused; for you may be sure my heart is with you."

"Enough!" said the Queen. Then, lowering her voice, she added, "If you can win over the Lord Hastings, you will do me infinite service."

"It is in that hope that I leave you, madame," replied Jane. "I have his promise. And now, farewell, madame. You shall soon hear from me, and by some faithful messenger."

With a low reverence to the Queen, she then joined Lord Hastings, who had watched her narrowly during the interview.

From the cloisters they proceeded to the great hall, where Jane found one of her servants, and gave directions that the household goods she had brought with her should be taken back to the Palace.

The outer gate of the Sanctuary was kept constantly closed, and a strong guard placed at it to prevent any attempt to violate the asylum. Lord Hastings had been allowed admittance, but his attendants were compelled to remain outside.

Jane's heart smote her as she passed through the gate, but she felt she must now go on. Fate forced her to quit the Sanctuary, and rush upon her doom.

Followed by his attendants, Lord Hastings conducted her to the Palace.

All had been thrown into confusion by the Queen's sudden flight, but Jane's apartments were undisturbed.

Having put her in possession of them, and given orders that the same attention should be paid to her as heretofore, Lord Hastings retired.

END OF THE FIFTH BOOK.

BOOK VI.

LORD HASTINGS.

I.

SHOWING THE PREVIEW OF ALICE FORDHAM.

A few days after her return to the Palace, Jane, to her great surprise, received a visit from her former confidante and companion, Alice Fordham.

Highly indignant, she was about to order the intruder's instant departure; but Alice threw herself on her knees, and made so many

protestations of regret for her conduct, that at length Jane forgave her, and allowed her to remain.

"I have behaved infamously to you, Jane," said the distressed friend; "but I know the goodness of your heart, and therefore venture to you. I still hope I may be able to serve you."

"I never wanted a friend more than now, Alice," said Jane; "and if you are sincere in your professions of regard, you can materially assist me."

"I have come with that intent," said Alice. "I hope I shall be able to free you from your worst enemy, the Lord Protector."

"You promise too much, Alice," remarked Jane. "He is beyond your power."

"Tis possible that a mortal blow can be dealt by an unseen hand," said Alice.

"What mean you?" cried Jane, looking at her inquiringly.

"You have heard that a waxen figure can be prepared by certain strong enchantments, in the likeness of an enemy whom we would destroy—so that, as the image melts, our enemy will perish."

"I have heard of such a thing," replied Jane; "but I have no faith in it. Nor, if I believed in the sorcery, would I employ it."

"Here is an image of the Lord Protector," said Alice, producing a small waxen figure. "You may know whom it represents by the high shoulders, and even by the features. I bought it from a witch, by whom it was made, and who assures me it will prove effectual. Pins are stuck to the heart, as you see. Try it."

"No," replied Jane; "I will not resort to witchcraft to rid myself of an enemy."

"You are more scrupulous than the Queen," said Alice. "She and her mother, the Duchess of Bedford, notoriously practised enchantments, and it has even been said that you yourself brewed philters to enthrall the King."

"You could contradict that idle talk, Alice," said Jane.

"Yes; I know the sole magic you practised proceeded from your own fascinations; but I have heard some credulous people affirm that you retained your power over the King by spells. These persons declare you are now employing the same arts upon Lord Hastings. This is a lie to defend yourself. I am well aware that Lord Hastings has been long acquainted with you."

"Lord Hastings never dared to breathe a word of love to me till after the King's death," said Jane; "and he is quite aware that his wife is alive."

"That is true," replied Jane, sceptically. "I have heard the contrary. 'Tis said that Lord Hastings has asked you to quit the Sanctuary, and has offered to defend you against the King's wrath."

"That is true," replied Jane. "Lord Hastings has shown himself a devoted friend,

but nothing more. I did not encourage his suit, and he desisted. Since I returned to the palace, I have only seen him twice."

"You will see him to-day," said Alice.

"How know you this?" asked Jane.

Alice smiled significantly.

"You will find I am right," she said. "I perceive you are not inclined to take me into your confidence, and I will not ask it. But I am not to be duped."

"I cannot allow this freedom, Alice," said Jane, coldly. "Our former familiarity must not be renewed. I am not in the mood for idle converse."

"Is that a hint you would have me go?" said the other.

"My spirits are not good. I am best alone," rejoined Jane.

"You expect Lord Hastings, and want to be rid of me," said Alice. "Nay, the remark was made in jest."

"Such jests are not to my taste," said Jane, sharply.

"Certes, you are much changed," rejoined Alice. "But no wonder! The precariousness of your position naturally makes you feel uneasy. We shall meet again sooner than you expect, and then you may regret that you have not been more gracious to me. Adieu!"

During the foregoing colloquy, Alice had contrived to slip the wax figure into a small coffer that was standing on the table.

The treacherous act was unperceived by Jane.

II.

HOW JANE WAS ARRESTED, AND TAKEN TO THE TOWER.

LATER on in the day, Lord Hastings made his appearance.

He looked greatly pre-occupied; and after a greeting had passed between him and Jane, he said to her, "I am sorry I induced you to quit the Sanctuary, and advise you to return thither. I may no longer be able to protect you. If Gloucester persists in his present course, I shall be compelled to declare against him; and Lord Stanley, the Archbishop of York, and the Bishop of Ely have come to a like determination. Not only are we denied access to the young King and the Duke of York, but we find they are allowed very few attendants, while the Lord Protector has an unusual number of retainers, not only at the Tower, but at Crosby House, where he entertains the Lord Mayor and the citizens. The coronation, which ought to take place soon, is again postponed. All this convinces me that the Lord Protector has some ill design."

"Doubt it not, my lord," observed Jane. "He means to seize his nephew's crown."

"That he shall never do, while I can wield a sword," said Hastings. "I will lay down my life in defence of King Edward's sons. If remonstrances fail, I will resort to sterner means. To-morrow, at the meeting of the Council, I shall demand that the two Princes

be brought before us; and if the Protector refuses compliance, I will slay him with my own hand. Buckingham, also, must die. Thus only can the safety of the young Princess be secured."

"Have I permission to impart your design to the Queen, my lord?" said Jane.

"Breathe it not to any one!" replied Hastings. "Absolute secrecy is required. Gloucester is excessively vigilant, and has a multitude of spies."

Just then he fancied he heard a sound, and, suddenly starting up, he raised a fold of arras.

But, quick as was the action, the listener was gone, if there had been one there.

"'Twas a false alarm," he said, as he returned. "Had I been overheard, my plan would have been ruined, and I should lose my head. Having explained to you the perilous game I am playing, I will now take my departure. Should success crown my attempt, we shall soon meet again. If not, we part for ever. Meanwhile, follow my advice, and return to the Sanctuary."

For some time after the departure of Lord Hastings, Jane continued occupied in anxious reflection, for she could not disguise from herself the extreme hazard of the attempt.

She then summoned a female attendant, and directed her to pack up a few articles of wearing apparel, and some other matters that she wished to take with her to the Sanctuary.

These preparations were soon made, and the handmaiden had just brought in a little valise containing the articles in question, when the door was thrown open, and, to Jane's great alarm, Sir William Catesby entered with an officer.

Half a dozen halibordiers could be seen standing in the gallery outside.

"Madame," said Catesby, "I have a disagreeable duty to perform. I am sent by the lords of the Council to arrest you, and convey you to the Tower."

"With what offence am I charged, sir?" she demanded.

"With conspiring, by certain magical practices, to injure and destroy the Lord Protector," replied Hastings.

Jane then saw the imprudence she had committed in holding any converse with Alice Fordham, but she unhesitatingly replied, "The charge is false."

"I hope it may turn out so, madame," said Catesby. "My injunctions are to make search for anything tending to prove your criminality."

He then signed to the officer, who proceeded at once to the table, and, after a moment's pretended search, opened the coffer and discovered the wax figure.

Taking it forth, he brought it to his leader.

"Here is proof against you, madame," said Catesby. "There can be no doubt that this is an image of the Lord Protector."

"And equally certain that the object is malevolent," said the officer.

"'Tis a plot against my life, contrived by Alice Fordham," cried Jane.

"You must convince the Council of that," said Catesby.

"I do not expect to convince them," returned Jane, "because they are prejudiced against me, and ready to decide as the Lord Protector may enjoin."

"Such language will not serve you, madame," said Catesby. "You must now to the Tower with me. You are at liberty to take a female attendant with you, and any apparel you may require."

"I am ready to attend you, sir," said Jane. "That trunk contains all I need. You will go with me, Miriam," she added, to her hand-maiden, who was weeping bitterly.

"I will go with you to death, madame," replied Miriam.

"Nay, I trust all will go well," said Jane. "Thou canst prove that I practise no magic arts."

"I can, madame," said the hand-maiden, earnestly.

Jane and her attendant were then conducted by a private way to the palace stairs, where a covered boat was waiting, in which they were conveyed to the Tower.

Arrived there, Jane was at once taken to the large chamber in the White Tower, where the Council was sitting at the time.

III.

HOW JANE WAS BROUGHT BEFORE THE LORD PROTECTOR AND THE COUNCIL.

IN that unrivalled hall, in the uppermost story of the White Tower, where consultations on matters of import to the State were then held, the chief members of the Council were assembled.

From the massive wooden pillars supporting the roof of this vast and lofty apartment, heavy tapestry of a sombre hue was hung, so as completely to surround the Council table, and prevent the discussions there carried on from being overheard by any but privileged officers.

At the head of the Council board sat the Lord Protector, magnificently robed.

On his right was the Cardinal Archbishop of Canterbury; on the left the Archbishop of York. The Duke of Buckingham, the Bishop of Ely, Lord Stanley, and several other nobles, were present, but Lord Hastings did not occupy his customary seat at the table.

Before these personages Jane was brought by Catesby and the officer, after being led through a long gallery filled with armed men; and when she looked around, and saw the stern countenances fixed upon her, her heart sank, and she felt ready to faint.

By a great effort, however, she recovered her composure, and after making a profound reverence to the Council, waited to be interrogated.

"Bring the woman somewhat nearer to me!" cried the Lord Protector, in a stern voice.

And as the order was obeyed, and Jane came forward, he said,—

"Art thou not afraid to look me in the face, after the grievous bodily harm thou hast done me?"

Nothing daunted by his fierce glances, Jane replied,—

"I can regard you steadfastly, my lord, and declare before heaven that I have never injured you."

"Let this sight confound thee, then!" he cried, drawing up the sleeve of his doublet, and displaying his left arm, the skin of which was shrivelled, and yellow as parchment. "This mischief has been done me by thy enchantments, and had I not discovered the cause, my whole body would have been wasted and dried up."

A slight murmur pervaded the assemblage.

"My lord," said Jane, firmly, "the King, your brother, told me that your left arm was thus blighted from your birth, and several here present must be aware of the circumstance. His Grace of Buckingham can testify to it, if he will."

"I have heard the Lord Protector say that his arm had become strangely shrunken of late," observed Buckingham; "and I told his Highness that the injury must be caused by witchcraft."

"Ay, and thou art the witch who hast wrought the mischief!" cried Gloucester, casting a severe look at Jane. "I suspected thee, because I know that by philters and love-potions the King, my brother, was held in thy power."

"Were King Edward living, you had not dared to accuse me thus, my lord," replied Jane, courageously. "He would have defended me from the false charge!"

"Thy effrontery is matchless, but it will not avail thee," said Gloucester. "Proof can be given of thy magic practices."

"It can, my lord," observed Catesby, pressing forward. "This figure of your Highness, evidently prepared by sorcery, and pierced to the heart by pins, as you see, has just been found in a coffer in Mistress Shore's room."

All glances were directed towards the figure, which was laid on the Council table by Catesby.

"This figure, you say, was found in Mistress Shore's room, Sir William?" demanded Gloucester.

"Scarce two hours ago, my lord," replied Catesby.

"They who hide can find," said Jane. "She by whom the figure was fabricated placed it where it could not fail to be discovered. 'Tis a device to destroy me."

"Contrived by whom?" said Buckingham.

"By Alice Fordham," replied Jane.

"Alice Fordham is here?" observed the Duke. "Let her be brought before us."

Alice was introduced, but though she maintained a bold deportment, she did not look towards Jane.

Questioned by the Duke of Buckingham, she denied that she had hidden the magic figure, but asserted that Jane had shown it to her, and declared that by means of it she could destroy the Lord Protector.

By this statement, which was very confidently made, a certain impression was made on the Council.

It must be remembered that at this time a belief in witchcraft was universally entertained, and few were free from superstition.

"You swear to the truth of what you have stated?" said Buckingham.

"Solemnly," replied Alice, "I have long known that Mistress Shore is a sorceress. Moreover, a far greater lady has been her associate in these dark practices."

"Dost hint at the Queen, mistress?" demanded Gloucester. "Speak plainly."

"Your Highness has said it," replied Alice.

"'Tis utterly false," cried Jane. "This monstrous accusation will obtain credit from no one."

"I credit it!" thundered Gloucester. "I believe that thou hast conspired with my brother's wife to destroy me by witchcraft, since she can reach me in no other way. With this wicked intent didst thou join her in the Abbey Sanctuary, and there thy malignant spells were wrought."

"I care not to defend myself, my lord!" said Jane. "Believe me guilty if you will, but I will lift up my voice for the Queen, since none other in this assemblage will speak for her. If she could subtly and certainly have destroyed your Highness, as you assert, would she have delivered up her youngest son to you? Would she not rather have waited the result of the secret blow? The Lord Cardinal, and other lords here present, witnessed her anguish, and know that she never expected to behold her son again. Would she have had this fear if she had felt certain of your destruction? I trow not."

"I'll hear no more!" cried Gloucester, impatiently. "I cannot reach your partner in crime, but I will have you burned as a witch."

"I pray your Highness to suspend your judgment," interposed Lord Stanley. "The witness against this unhappy lady is utterly unworthy of credit. She is actuated by vindictive feelings, and has herself been guilty of criminal practices, as I will show. Bring in that monk who waits without," he added, to the officer.

Immediately afterwards, a Franciscan friar was introduced. His cowl was thrown back, so that his pallid features could be seen.

On his appearance a manifest change was produced in Alice's demeanour, but Jane looked wistfully at him.

"What hast thou to state respecting Alice Fordham, father?" demanded Lord Stanley.

"I could state much as to her falsehood and treachery towards her generous friend," replied the friar. "But it may suffice to say that she stole from Mistress Shore a warrant for ten thousand marks, and intended to ap-

propriate the amount to herself, but I forced her to give up the money, and took it back to its rightful owner."

"'Tis a large sum!" exclaimed Gloucester. "It cannot all have been spent?"

"None of it has been spent by me, my lord," replied Jane, to whom the question was addressed. "The whole sum has been handed over to the Queen."

"My lord," said Lord Stanley, "we are all agreed that no credit can be attached to the evidence of Alice Fordham, and our sentence upon her is imprisonment for the offence she has committed."

"As yet we know not the name of her accuser," said Gloucester. "How art thou called?" he added, to the friar.

"In bygone days I was known as Alban Shore," replied the monk.

The answer caused general astonishment.

"Then thou art this woman's husband!" said Gloucester. "Dost thou not ask for her punishment?"

"No, my lord!" replied Shore.

"But she *shall* be punished," cried Gloucester; "if not for sorcery, for incontinency! Take her hence," he added, to the officers. "Lodge her in some prison within the Tower, till I see fit to deliver her to the Bishop of London for punishment."

"What is to be done with Alice Fordham, my lord?" inquired Catesby.

"Let her likewise be imprisoned," replied the Lord Protector.

Ere she was removed, Jane looked towards Shore, and found his gaze fixed compassionately upon her.

IV.

PRESAGES OF ILL.

On that day Lord Hastings did not attend the Council at the Tower, but remained in his magnificent mansion on the banks of the Thames, and occupied himself in preparations for the morrow.

He did not retire to rest till late, but about an hour after midnight he was roused from his slumbers by an attendant, who told him Lord Stanley was without, and desired immediate speech with him.

Surprised and alarmed, Hastings sprang from his couch, and, putting on a loose gown, caused his untimely visitor to be introduced.

The expression of Lord Stanley's countenance prepared him for some direful communication.

"I have had a remarkable dream to-night," said Stanley, "and it has produced so strong an effect upon me that I have come to relate it to your lordship. It concerns you as well as myself."

"Methought we were hunting the wild boar in a forest that was entirely strange to me. The huntsman was gone, and the hounds had fled. Both our horses were killed, but we continued the chase on foot. Suddenly the boar turned upon us. We struck him repeatedly with our spears, but he appeared invulnerable. After a short conflict you were

trampled beneath the infuriated animal's feet, and I saw his tusks pierce your side. You were baffled in blood. In vain I strove to assist you. I was thrown down likewise, and gored, and, with a sharp pang, I awoke."

"How do you interpret this dream?" remarked Hastings, after a brief pause.

"Thus, my lord," replied Stanley. "The wounds and blood signify danger of life to both of us. The boar is Gloucester's cognizance, and plainly denotes from whom the danger is to be apprehended. I shall not remain within his reach. I have ordered my horses, and shall set out forthwith to join my friends in the North, and I counsel your lordship to come with me and place yourself in safety."

"I thank you for the warning," said Hastings, "and though I own the dream is most surprising, and well calculated to cause alarm, it does not give me much uneasiness, nor will it turn me from my purpose. Instead of goring us, the boar, I hope, may be slain. But if you have any misgiving, I would not have you stay. Take horse as you design, and depart forthwith. You must, however, consider that your sudden flight will rouse suspicion, and unless the boar be struck to the heart he may find means of goring you, even at a distance."

"I cannot shake off my fears," said Stanley. "Nevertheless, I agree with you that flight may not ensure safety, but perhaps endanger it, and I will, therefore, tarry for the Council to-morrow."

"'Tis the best and boldest course," said Hastings. "You may be of infinite service to the young King. Let all your retainers wait for you on Tower Hill; they may be needed."

Stanley then departed, and Hastings returned to his couch; but not to sleep, for he had been made restless by this nocturnal visit.

Next morning, after he had breakfasted, he was preparing to set out for the Tower, and intended to take with him a large party of armed men, and leave them outside the fortress, when Sir Thomas Howard, son of Lord Howard, and a member of Gloucester's cabinet, made his appearance, and interfered with the plan.

On inquiring why Sir Thomas had come at such an early hour, Hastings was told that he had been sent by the Lord Protector.

"His Highness feared that your lordship might not attend the Council to-day, and having important business to despatch, he ordered me to fetch you."

"I will follow shortly," said Hastings.

"Nay, my lord; I will wait," rejoined Sir Thomas. "His Highness bade me bring you."

Finding he could not get rid of his troublesome visitor without causing mistrust, Hastings gave some private orders to his men, and set out on horseback with his enforced companion.

Sir Thomas had two grooms with him, and they appeared extremely watchful. As Lord Hastings rode past Blackfriars, his

horse stumbled, and again in Blackchapel, and on the second occasion the rider was nearly thrown.

"Were not your lordship the most fortunate of men, I should say these mischances are unlucky," observed Sir Thomas.

Hastings made no reply; but continued thoughtful till they approached the Tower.

On looking towards the spot where he had enjoined Stanley to station his men, he could not perceive them, nor did he see any concourse of citizens as he had expected. If a crowd had been collected on Tower Hill, it must have been dispersed.

But he was still further discouraged when, on reaching the barbican, he found the guard doubled, while the outer walls were thronged with armed men.

Not without misgiving did he cross the drawbridge, and pass through the gate.

On inquiry, he learned that Lord Stanley had already arrived, and that the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Ely had just landed at Tower-stairs, and proceeded to the Council chamber.

Every precaution to repress a tumult seemed to have been taken. A company of archers was drawn up in the lower ward, and a large party of arquebussiers was collected in the inner court.

Had any discovery been made? This Hastings wished to know, yet feared to ask. The preparations he beheld convinced him that his project must be abandoned.

Having dismounted near the Garden Tower, Hastings was marching with his companions towards the palace gate, when he was stopped by a Franciscan friar, who besought a word with him in private.

"What would you, holy father?" inquired Hastings.

"Turn back, if it be possible, my son," replied the monk, in a low voice, calculated not to reach the ear of Sir Thomas Howard, who was standing at a little distance. "I would have warned you, but I have not been able to quit the Tower."

"'Tis too late to turn back now, good father, even if there be danger," rejoined Hastings. "But why are these preparations made?"

"The Lord Protector suspects some plot against himself, my lord," replied the monk.

"Ha! Is it so?" cried Hastings.

"Knew you what happened yesterday?" inquired the monk.

"Speak! Keep me not in suspense!" said Hastings.

"Mistress Shore was arrested and imprisoned in the Beauchamp Tower," replied the friar.

"Mistress Shore imprisoned!" exclaimed Hastings. "I thought she had returned to the Sanctuary. With what crime is she charged?"

Before the monk could make any reply, Sir Thomas Howard interposed and said,—

"My lord, I doubt not the Lord Protector is impatiently expecting you. You cannot

have much to say to this holy man. You have no occasion for a priest as yet?" he added, significantly.

"Then you think I may need one presently?" observed Hastings.

"Nay, my lord; I said not so," rejoined Sir Thomas.

"Act on the hint, good father, and wait," said Hastings.

V.

HOW LORD HASTINGS WAS BREWHEADED ON TOWER GREEN.

ON entering the Council chamber, Hastings found all the members assembled—the only seat vacant being his own, which was situated at the upper end of the table, on the left of the Lord Protector.

"Soh! you are come at length, my lord?" cried Gloucester, in a fierce tone. "You have kept us waiting!"

"I trust I have caused no needless delay, my lord," replied Hastings. "I learn that the Council has not yet been called upon to deliberate on any matter of import. Before we proceed further, I have a proposition to make, to which, I persuade myself, your Highness will incline a favourable ear. Of late, there have been many disquieting rumours within the City of London, which have produced great agitation among the populace, as your Highness must be aware; but these murmurs can be speedily quelled, if the young King be taken from the Tower, where, methinks, he has been too long shut up, and shown to his loving subjects. I, therefore, propose that such a course, which, for the reasons I have given, I deem highly judicious, be adopted, and that the young King and his brother, the Duke of York, be forthwith exhibited to the citizens."

"We do not deem it expedient to carry out your suggestion, my lord," said Gloucester. "Our royal nephews are safest within the Tower, and we shall not suffer them to go forth, even at your earnest solicitation."

"But will not your Highness listen to the recommendation of the Council?" said Hastings.

"The vote of the Council has not yet been taken, my lord, and would be against you, I am persuaded," rejoined Gloucester. "But why this sudden change of opinion? Till now you have judged it best that the young King should remain secluded, with his brother, till the Coronation. Have you been instigated to make this request by the Queen? If so, I can understand the motive."

"I have held no communication with the Queen, my lord," replied Hastings. "Her Majesty has no liking for me, neither have I any affection for her."

"But you have conspired with Mistress Shore, who is in the Queen's confidence."

"Your Highness wrongs me!" cried Hastings.

"You have conspired, I say, with that sorcerer against my life!" roared Gloucester. "Had not your treasonable design been re-

vealed to me, I should infallibly have been your victim. Your purpose was to stab me where I sit, and next bathing your steel in Buckingham's life-blood, to seize upon the two young Princes. 'Tis useless to deny it, for there is one here who overheard you."

"Who is my accuser?" demanded Hastings.

"I am, my lord," replied Catesby, stepping forward. "Learn, to your confusion, that I was behind the arras when you disclosed your design to Mistress Shore!"

"Now thou seest how I became acquainted with thy villany!" cried Gloucester.

"Your purpose was to slay the Lord Protector and the Duke of Buckingham at the Council table, and then take upon you the government of the young King and the kingdom," pursued Catesby. "But Heaven would not suffer such an evil scheme to prosper."

"Dost thou hear, traitor?—dost thou hear?" cried Gloucester.

At this juncture, several members of the Council, who had hitherto been kept silent by astonishment and alarm, rose to their feet.

Gloucester, however, would allow no interference, but struck his hand violently twice or thrice upon the table.

At this signal, several halberdiers rushed in, and, by the Lord Protector's orders, seized Hastings, who offered no resistance.

Lord Stanley, however, came to the assistance of his friend, but received a severe wound in the head, and fell beneath the table. By the direction of Catesby, who conducted these proceedings, the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Ely were next arrested, and these measures caused the greatest consternation among the Council.

"What shall be done with this heinous offender, my lord?" said Catesby, pointing to Hastings, who remained in custody of the guard.

"I will not ask my life," said the ill-fated noble, with dignity. "I am well convinced your Highness will not spare me, either for old friendship or for service rendered you."

"Thou hast forfeited all claim upon me," rejoined Gloucester, in an inexorable tone. "Take him forth," he added. "Let him make a short shrift, if he will. By Saint Paul! I will not dine till I have had his head!"

The unfortunate Hastings was then hurried away, lest his looks should excite compassion among the members of the Council.

Dragged by his guards along the gallery at the side of the Council chamber, he was forced down a spiral stone staircase to the guard chamber, whence, without even allowing a momentary halt, he was taken forth upon the green, and led towards Saint Peter's Chapel.

Catesby, with his sword drawn, marched at a little distance behind the doomed man, but not a word passed between them.

Close to the sacred edifice lay a log of wood, intended for repairs. Beside this piece of timber, and showing that some preparations had been made for the execution, re-

stood two figures. These were the Franciscan friar with whom Hastings had recently spoken, and the headsmen.

The latter, who was leaning upon his axe, was a strongly-built, savage-looking personage, with brawny arms bared to the shoulder. He wore a buff jerkin and a leather apron, and had a leather cap on his head.

"Make the most of your time, my lord," said Catesby, advancing. "Many minutes cannot be allowed you."

He then retired; and Hastings threw himself at the feet of the monk, who held the crucifix towards him.

"Have you aught to confess to me, my son?" inquired the monk.

"Alas! good father," cried Hastings, "had I as many hours left as I have minutes, I could not enumerate half my sins!"

"Do not despair, my son," replied the monk. "Do you forgive all your enemies, even him who has brought you to this terrible strait?"

"Even him," replied Hastings; "and pray earnestly that all those I have injured may forgive me."

"Since your repentance, though late, is deep and sincere, I grant you absolution," replied the monk. "By the power derived from holy Peter, I will loose and deliver you from all your sins, known and unknown, mortal and venial. Wherefore, raise up your heart to heaven! Accept of the penance of death as due to your sins, and trust in Divine mercy."

"I do so implicitly, father," replied Hastings, fervently. "May heaven be merciful to me, a sinner!"

"Amen!" exclaimed the monk.

"Are you ready, my lord?" observed the headsmen, receiving an impatient sign from Catesby. "Time grows short."

Divesting himself of his richly-embroidered mantle, Hastings threw it on the ground.

"Take that as thy fee, fellow!" he said.

"Kneel down, my lord!" said the grim headsmen, pointing to the rude block.

Hastings obeyed, and his head was stricken off by a single blow.

A cry from a window in the Beauchamp Tower showed that Jane had witnessed the terrible incident.

"Wrap this ghastly relic in a napkin," said Catesby to the headsmen, "and take it to the Lord Protector. He has sworn not to dine till it be brought him!"

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

BOOK VII.

THE PENANCE.

I.

OF THE ATTEMPT MADE BY DORSET TO DELIVER THE YOUNG PRINCES FROM THE TOWER.

THE DEATH OF HASTINGS, and the imprisonment of Lord Stanley, the Archbishop of

York, and the Bishop of Ely, struck such terror into the few remaining adherents of the young Prince, that no farther attempt was made to oppose Gloucester's daring design.

The crown was shortly afterwards publicly offered him by Buckingham, before a large assemblage, at Baynard's Castle, and accepted with feigned reluctance, amid shouts of "Long live Richard the Third!"

The treasures amassed by his royal brother were next seized upon, and appropriated to his own use, or bestowed on his favourites.

The ceremonies prepared for his nephew were destined to serve his own turn, and the usurper's coronation took place, with great splendour, in Westminster Abbey.

But though he had attained the summit of his ambition, he could not feel secure while his nephews lived. Some rising would infallibly be made in their favour that might hurl him from the throne, and set up Edward the Fifth in his stead. Already, Buckingham, who had helped to raise him, was discontented, and no more formidable leader of a rebellion could be found.

The pretext would infallibly be, "King Edward's children." That cry must never be heard. It was useless to shut up his nephews in the Tower. They would escape, or be set free. No: they must be removed by death, as all others who stood in his way had been removed. But the manner of their death must be mysterious and inexplicable. None, save the perpetrators of the deed, must know how they perished.

Having formed his fatal determination, the usurper resolved to carry it out. To this end he deemed it best to absent himself for a while from London, hoping by such means to avoid suspicion; and he therefore set out on a progress to York, and journeyed as far as Gloucester, where he halted, the distance from London being suitable to his wicked design.

Meanwhile, his intended victims continued prisoners in the Tower, and occupied two or three rooms situated at the rear of the palace, and looking upon the Privy Garden.

All their pages and attendants had been dismissed, and only one person, Digton, the warder, was allowed to wait upon them.

Subdued by this harsh treatment, the young King Edward the Fifth, as he had once been styled, almost, it now seemed, in mockery, became very melancholy, and neglected his attire, and, though he uttered few complaints, it was evident he was pining away.

The little Duke of York, however, managed to keep up his spirits, and endeavoured to cheer his brother; but not even his lively sallies could bring a smile to Edward's pale face.

One day, when the unfortunate young Prince was seated in a large arm-chair, in a listless posture, and looking very pensive and very sad, the Duke of York came behind him, and, putting his arms round his neck, said,—

RICHARD ACOT JANE OF NORCERY



"Prithet tell me your thoughts, sweet brother."

"I was thinking how much happier I should be if I had not been born a prince, Richard. Had I not the misfortune to be a King's son, I should be at liberty—able to do as I please, and go where I list. I should provoke no man's jealousy. And thou, sweet brother, art equally unfortunate."

"I would not renounce my birthright if Gloucester would set me free on that condition," rejoined the Duke of York. "Do not despair, brother; you may yet sit upon the throne."

"Never!" replied Edward. "I shall never reign, nor wilt thou! We are doomed. The sins of our fathers will be visited upon us. Listen to me, brother," he continued solemnly.

"All the descendants of Edmond Langley, chief of the House of York, have died a violent or premature death. Our great-grand sire, Edward, Duke of York, was slain at the battle of Azincour. Richard, Earl of Cambridge, his brother, lost his head upon the scaffold. Our grand sire, Richard, Duke of York, and his son, Edmond, Duke of Rutland, perished at Wakefield. Our uncle, the Duke of Clarence, was murdered here, in the Tower. The King, our father, died before his time; and 'tis said," he added, lowering his voice, "that he died by poison. Shall we escape Divine vengeance—we, who belong to the fourth generation? I fear, not, brother I fear not!"

"But we have committed no crime!" said Richard.

"Our fathers have sinned, and we must suffer, as I have just pointed out," rejoined Edward. "We ought not to repine."

"Nevertheless, I find the confinement in these rooms very irksome," observed Richard. "I would get out of the Tower if an opportunity offered. But we are too closely watched by Dighton. He will not even let us take exercise in the Privy Garden, or in the court. He says it is against the King's order. Why, you are the King, brother!"

"Alas! no; I am deposed," said Edward.

"If Gloucester is an instrument of Heaven, he must be a scourge," observed Richard. "But I think he is an agent of the Prince of Darkness. When the King our father lived, Gloucester did not dare raise his hand against us, and now he treats us thus infernally. But we will repay him."

"Peace, brother!" cried Edward.

"I cannot hold my peace. I am too greatly incensed," rejoined Richard. "I would that Gloucester with cruelty and treachery to his face, if he came near us."

"Have a care, brother!" said Edward, as a noise was heard at the door. "Here comes Dighton with our repast."

"Dighton is the tool of a tyrant," cried Richard, determined that the warder should hear him.

But it was not Dighton who entered.

It was a tall young man, habited precisely

like the warder, but much taller, and differing in features and manner. He brought with him a basket containing a few eatables and bread, which he placed on the table.

While he was thus occupied, the two young Princes stared at him, as if doubting the evidence of their senses.

At length they both sprang towards him, calling out, "The Dorset—our brother Dorset!" and flung themselves into his welcoming arms.

Yes; it was the Marquis of Dorset in that strange disguise.

"You need not be told that I have ventured here in the hope of liberating you," said Dorset, as soon as he had extricated himself from their embraces. "If Heaven prospers my undertaking, you shall both be out of Gloucester's power to-night."

"So soon!" exclaimed Richard, clapping his hands joyfully.

"Calm yourself, brother!" said Edward. "Let us hear Dorset's plan."

"The attempt would never have been made but for the Queen's entreaties," said the Marquis. "But I could not resist her prayers, and yesterday ventured forth from the Sanctuary on this perilous errand. At the very onset there was danger, for the Sanctuary is now surrounded by armed men, to prevent all egress and ingress; but I escaped. After making all needful arrangements for your flight, I contrived to gain admittance to the Tower, and, by promise of a large reward, purchased the assistance of your attendant, Dighton. I have thus gained access to you. To-night a boat will be outside the Tower wharf, waiting to carry off two fugitives. You will both, I trust, be on the wharf at midnight—will both be placed on board the boat, and conveyed in safety to Westminster—and thence, despite all difficulties, to the Sanctuary, where you will be shrouded to the Queen's anxious breast."

"That thought gives me fresh energy," said Edward. "I never hoped to behold the Queen and my sisters again. But how are we to reach the wharf, my lord?"

"I will conduct you thither," replied Dorset. "Hold yourselves in readiness for my appearance. At the appointed hour I will come to you; and then, if all goes well, you shall be quickly free from constraint, and as quickly restored to the Queen!"

"Heaven deliver us from our uncle Gloucester! That shall be my fervent prayer to—"

be careful what they said to the warder visit them, Dorset then took his departure.

II.

As may well be supposed, the intervening hours seemed to pass very slowly with the youthful prisoners—especially with the Duke of York, whose disposition was exceedingly impatient. They did nothing but talk of the

Queen and the Princesses, their sisters, and of the expected joyful meeting with them. Alas! it was destined never to take place.

In the evening, Dighton brought them supper, and lighted their lamp, and they thought he regarded them wistfully, but in compliance with Dorset's injunctions, they did not address him, and he soon went away.

Nothing further occurred. After awhile, they grew tired of talking, and Richard fell asleep on his brother's shoulder, and slumbered on thus till near midnight, when Edward, who had counted the hours by the bell, thought it best to wake him.

Scarcely had he done so, when the door opened, and Dorset came in.

"Are you ready?" he asked.

"Quite ready!" they both replied.

After extinguishing the lamp—for Dorset being well acquainted with the place, did not require a light—they went forth, and tracked a long, dark corridor.

No guard appeared to be stationed there, nor could any light be seen, or sound heard. But Dorset easily discovered a short spiral staircase communicating with the Privy Garden.

Taking a hand of each, Dorset then led them noiselessly across the garden. Fortunately, the night was profoundly dark, so there was small chance of discovery.

Presently, they came to a postern constructed in the high stone wall surrounding the garden, and Dorset having cautiously unlocked this door, they issued forth into the outer ward, almost opposite the Cradle Tower.

Again the darkness screened them from the observation of the sentinels, if there were any on the walls.

At that time a vaulted gateway connected with the tower just mentioned, led to a narrow drawbridge, which was defended by a strong iron gate.

Through the instrumentality, doubtless, of Dighton, the little drawbridge was now lowered, and the gate open, and in another minute the youthful Princes and their conductor had crossed the moat, and were standing safely upon the wharf, with the darkling river flowing past them.

At last they were out of the Tower, and escape seemed now certain.

Richard could hardly repress his transports of delight, and even Edward felt elated.

They all flew to the edge of the wharf, resolved not to lose an instant in springing on board; but how dreadfully were their expectations crushed, when no boat could be descried!

Dorset still hoped the boat would come. But the risk of discovery would be infinitely increased by delay, and he looked back in terror, and listened anxiously for any alarming sound from the walls.

Again he plunged his gaze into the darkness—hoping, praying, that the boat might appear. But it came not.

A slight fog hung upon the river, and this

added to the obscurity. Sounds were heard in the distance, but nothing could be distinguished.

During this severe trial, the sensations of the unfortunate young Princes almost amounted to agony, but they uttered no reproaches.

Edward stood quite still, though trembling in spite of himself; but Richard seized Dorset's hand, and said,—

"Brother, do not let them take us back to the Tower!"

"What can I do?" rejoined Dorset, distractedly. "What can I do?"

Just then a sound was heard that annihilated all hope, if any had remained.

The alarm bell was rung in the palace, and shouts resounded along the walls.

Almost instantaneously, as it seemed, torches were brought to the summit of the Traitor's Tower, and these cast a lurid light upon the river, and disclosed the youthful fugitives standing upon the wharf, while loud shouts arose from the guard, who were armed with arquebusses. They did not fire, for they had recognised the young Princes; but they ordered them not to stir.

At the same time, armed men, provided with torches, could be seen hurrying through the archway of the Portcullis Tower into the outer ward, and shouts were exchanged between this party and the arquebussiers on Traitor's Tower, from which the former learnt that the fugitives were on the wharf, whereupon Sir Robert Brakenbury, who was with the party, hastened in that direction.

Seeing that capture was inevitable, Dorset consulted for a moment with the young Princes, who approved his design, and bidding them, as it proved, an eternal adieu, he ran to the edge of the wharf, and plunged into the river.

Surprised by this desperate step, the arquebussiers, who took him from his garb to be a warder, instantly fired, but none of the shots took effect, and he swam rapidly down the current.

Next moment, Sir Robert Brakenbury, followed by a dozen halberdiers, appeared on the wharf.

It was a very affecting sight as the young Princes surrendered themselves to the Lieutenant. Brakenbury made few observations at the time, putting no questions to them as to their escape, and forbore even to ask the name of the individual who had plunged into the river.

Very respectfully, and with a sad expression of countenance, he conducted the Princes back to their apartments in the palace, deferring all investigation until the morrow, and only giving orders that the guard should be doubled.

III.

IN WHAT MANNER THE YOUNG PRINCES WERE PUT TO DEATH IN THE GARDEN TOWER.

KING RICHARD THE THIRD was at Warwick Castle when he received intelligence of the

attempt to liberate the young Princes, and he resolved no longer to delay their destruction.

Already he had sent a confidential messenger to Brakenbury with a letter enjoining him to make away secretly with the prisoners, but the Lieutenant refused to obey the order.

Richard was therefore obliged to find another agent, and after some consideration, he chose Sir James Tyrrell, one of his retinue, whom he knew to be bold and unscrupulous.

Tempted by the promises of immediate reward and future preferment, Tyrrell accepted the dreadful task without hesitation, and set out at once for the Tower, furnished with an order from the King to the Lieutenant.

On his arrival, he had a private conference with Brakenbury.

The Lieutenant again refused to be accessory to any secret murder, and said,—

"My soul revolts against the deed, and if I could prevent it I would; but I am powerless, as you know. On your head, and not on mine, be the blood of these innocents!"

Tyrrell did not seem to heed the abhorrence with which his fell design was regarded by the Lieutenant, but prepared to execute the King's mandate.

Dighton, the warder, who still attended on the Princes, having contrived to satisfy the Lieutenant that he had no hand in the recent attempt to escape, appeared a fitting instrument for the business, and proved to be pliant.

With him was associated Miles Forrest, who had been concerned in the murder of the Duke of Clarence, and these two miscreants undertook a deed from which all others shrank.

Within the last few days, by an order received from the King, the unfortunate Princes had been removed—for greater security, it was said, but it may be for other reasons—from the palace to the Garden Tower, as the structure was then styled—though it subsequently acquired a far more terrible designation, which still continues attached to it.

Beneath this tower yawns a low-browed archway, once protected by a massive gate at either end, and by a strong portcullis.

Immediately above the arch, and reached by a short circular stone staircase, is a room in which the portcullis is worked; and this gloomy chamber and the ponderous defensive machine—though the latter is no longer used—are still in pretty nearly the same state as heretofore.

It was in the upper part of this structure that the two Princes were confined on their removal from the palace.

A small chamber was assigned them, containing a bed and one or two chairs, with another still smaller room adjoining it.

Nothing could be more dismal than the appearance of these cells—for such they were, in effect. The mullioned windows were strongly grated like those of a dungeon. The massive door of the little bed-chamber

was constantly locked and bolted at night by Dighton, and there was another strong door below to shut off the portcullis room, which was reached by a separate staircase.

The bed-chamber window looked upon the inner ward, and upon the White Tower; but it was placed too high up to be easily reached, and the youthful captives never gazed out from it.

Since the failure of their attempt at flight, they had become completely disheartened. Even Richard had lost his spirit. But as calamity pressed upon them, their brotherly love strengthened, and served to support them.

Convinced they had not long to live, they strove to prepare for death. No priest visited them—no one whatever was allowed to come near them, except Dighton, and his manner was now exceedingly morose.

But they had a missal, given to Richard by the Queen, which proved an inexpressible comfort to them. They read it together continually, and while they were thus employed, their hearts seemed lightened. Often did they wish they could pass away quietly while occupied in prayer.

Ever since they had been immured in this cell, a change had gradually taken place in their looks. Their features had now a sweet, resigned, almost angelic expression, which they wore to the last.

Their discourse was no longer of earthly matters, but of celestial joys, in which they hoped to participate.

"Heaven, in its mercy, will soon take us hence," said Edward, "and then we shall be free from all care. Our sufferings, I trust, will serve as an atonement for such sins as we have committed. Do you forgive all our enemies, Richard?"

"All; except our cruel uncle," replied the little Duke of York. "Him I cannot forgive."

"But you must forgive even him!" said Edward, gravely.

"I will try to do whatever you enjoin me, brother," said the Duke. "But this is beyond my power. I have not told you of the dream I had last night."

"I had a dream likewise," said Edward. Let me relate mine first. Methought this prison-chamber opened, and we were wafted away by angels."

"My dream was precisely similar," observed Richard. "What do such visions portend, brother?"

"A speedy death," replied Edward. "Perchance to-night!"

Richard heard the explanation without a tremor.

"I thought so," he said, "and, therefore, I did not mention my dream before."

"I shall lay my head upon the pillow tranquilly," said Edward, "hoping I may awake in heaven."

"And so shall I, brother," said Richard. That night, at a late hour, the door of the cell was opened, and two dark figures could be

seen standing outside, one of whom held a lamp.

Despite the noise caused by drawing back the bolts, the gentle sleepers did not wake. They were lying close together, and Richard's arm encircled his brother's neck. From their looks they might be dreaming of Paradise.

Touching as the picture was, it moved not the ruffians who contemplated it.

But as they seemed to pause, a stern voice was heard from the stone staircase, commanding them to proceed with their work.

The foremost ruffian then stepped forward, and plucked the pillow from beneath the heads of the sleepers.

Even then the Princes did not stir, though Richard sighed. It seemed beneficently intended that they should pass away in slumber.

Five minutes later, the dreadful deed was done.

Sir James Tyrrell entered the chamber. The murderers, with their ghastly countenances, were standing beside the couch. The light of the lamp fell upon the victims. The pillow had been removed. The attitude of the brothers was unchanged—their expression placid, even in death.

By Sir James Tyrrell's direction, the unfortunate Princes were buried deep in the ground at the foot of the stone staircase.

Subsequently, however, the bodies were conveyed, by King Richard's order, to another grave in the White Tower, which remained long undiscovered.

But the remains of the royal youths being found in 1674, they were finally interred in Henry the Seventh's Chapel in Westminster Abbey.

Having accomplished his work, Sir James Tyrrell set off for Warwick to claim his reward.

His reward, in the end, was the scaffold.

Dorset was not drowned on the night when he attempted to liberate the Princes from the Tower. He was picked up by a boat, and after running several other risks, contrived to regain the Abbey Sanctuary.

It was his sad office to inform the Queen of the murder of her two sons.

Uttering a piercing shriek, she fell to the ground.

When she recovered her sensibility, she appeared half-frenzied, filled the hall with cries, tore her hair, beat her breast, and reproached herself bitterly with her madness in delivering her youngest son to destruction.

"My Richard, my darling, would he were here now, if I had remained firm!" she cried. "How could I part with him—how could I surrender him to the bloodthirsty Gloucester?"

She then knelt down, and with outstretched hands, invoked Heaven's vengeance.

"O, Lord!" she exclaimed, "remember, I pray thee, the death of these innocents, and avenge them!"

IV.

NOW JANE WAS DELIVERED TO THE MARCH OF LONDON FOR PUNISHMENT.

CONFINED for more than three months in the Beauchamp Tower, Jane had begun to look upon her prison as a haven of rest.

Her captivity had been wholly spent in devotion and acts of penitence, enjoined by her confessor, Father Lambert. Had the good priest been able to obtain a pardon from the vindictive King, he could have procured her admission to the Priory of Saint Helen's, the prioress being willing to receive her. But Richard's resentment was still strong as ever against her. Alice Fordham was set free, but Jane was reserved for punishment.

At length the officers of the Ecclesiastical Court came to the Tower, demanded the body of Jane Shore, and received her from the Lieutenant.

No indignity was spared her. Guarded by half-a-dozen halberdiers, like a common criminal, she was taken across Tower Hill, and through the public streets to the palace of the Bishop of London, which was situated on the north-west side of Saint Paul's.

She was accompanied by Father Lambert, and she had need of the good priest's support. As she passed along Cornhill and Cheapside, she was beset by crowds of curious spectators, but her looks and demeanour were so gentle and resigned, that all who beheld her were filled with compassion.

On arriving at the Bishop's palace, she was lodged in a small cell, and here Father Lambert left her, promising to attend at the court on the morrow.

A miserable pallet was provided, and her fare was bread and water, but she slept well on her wretched couch, and having resolved to fast, the food remained untouched.

Next day she was brought before the court, which was assembled in a large hall of the palace, panelled with black oak, and partially hung with tapestry. At the upper end was a large crucifix.

The Bishop was in full ecclesiastical attire, as were the dignitaries of the cathedral, by whom he was surrounded.

The prelate had an austere expression of countenance, and eyed Jane sternly as she stood before him.

She cast one timid, half-supplicating look at her judges, and then fixed her eyes on the ground.

She was very pale, and her cheeks bore traces of affliction, but her beauty was unimpaired, as all who beheld her acknowledged in their hearts.

Her dress was plain as that of a nun, and consisted of a gown of gray serge, and a wimple. A string of beads hung from her girdle. When she had been compelled to pass through the streets she had worn a hood, but this was now laid aside, and her fair tresses were uncovered.

Very few persons were admitted, or the

court would have been inconveniently crowded. Among those present were the Lord Mayor and several important citizens, who had petitioned the King in Jane's favour, but had not yet received an answer, though it was momentarily expected.

This circumstance caused a slight delay in the proceedings, but as no messenger appeared, the Bishop clothed his brow with frowns, and addressing Jane in a stern tone, severely censured her for her conduct—lashing her as with a whip of scorpions.

She attempted no reply, for she had nothing to allege in her defence; but Father Lambert earnestly recommended her to mercy on the score of her deep and sincere penitence, to which he could bear witness.

Doctor Lewis, the late King's physician, made a strong appeal to the Bishop and the court in her behalf, enumerating the many kind actions she had performed, and energetically declaring that if all these she had benefited and served were there to speak for her, the court would be filled with them.

But this eloquent address failed to touch the judges, and the Bishop was preparing to pass sentence, when an officer entered the court with a missive for the Lord Mayor.

The prelate paused while the letter was opened, and a feeling of intense anxiety pervaded the assemblage for a few moments, but it was then seen from the Lord Mayor's looks that the petition had failed.

At this trying juncture Jane manifested no emotion, and did not even raise her eyes.

Perfect silence being again restored, the Bishop sentenced Jane to perform public penance for her sin, the enormity of which he had already characterized, in Saint Paul's Cathedral on the following morning.

But the severe part of the sentence was to come, and for this the majority of the assemblage were wholly unprepared.

"Look at me, wretched woman, while I pronounce thy doom!" said the Bishop, yet more sternly than he had hitherto spoken. "When thou hast publicly declared thy repentance in the manner prescribed, it is the King's command that thou be cast forth into the streets in thy penitent garb, and be thenceforth treated as one excluded from the communion of our holy Church. None shall afford thee shelter, none give thee food or drink, on pain of death, but thou shalt be left to perish miserably! Such is thy sentence, and doubt not it will be rigorously fulfilled. I give thee no hope of pardon!"

A slight cry escaped Jane, but that was all. A couple of halberdiers advanced, and took her back to the cell.

As she quitted the court, she threw a grateful glance at Father Lambert and Doctor Lewis.

V.

HOW THE PENCEANCE WAS PERFORMED.

Next morning, at an early hour, an immense crowd was collected within the area in

front of Saint Paul's, it having been rumoured throughout the City that the beautiful Mistress Shere was about to perform public penance on that day.

The greatest curiosity was exhibited to witness the spectacle, and every available spot likely to command a view of it was occupied.

Every window looking upon the court of the Bishop's palace, upon Paul's Cross, and upon the great western porch of the Cathedral, was filled with spectators.

Gloomy weather harmonized with the scene about to be enacted. The vast edifice around which the throng was gathered looked unusually sombre, and its lofty spire could scarcely be distinguished amid heavy overhanging clouds.

Jane's career and extraordinary beauty formed the general theme of conversation. Though her conduct was blamed, some excuses were made for her, and it was universally admitted that her sentence was infinitely too severe. Many, indeed, spoke of it with horror and indignation.

To repress any attempt at tumult, a troop of archers was stationed at the rear of Paul's Cross.

Moreover, two lines of halberdiers extended from the gate of the Bishop's palace to the Cathedral porch.

About nine o'clock, a bell began to toll, and a solemn procession issued from the palace gate, and took its way slowly along the lane formed by the halberdiers.

The procession was headed by a long train of monks, in gowns and scapularies of brown russet. After them followed the chantry priests in their robes, the minor canons, the prebendaries, and the Dean, all in full pontificals.

Next came a priest, with a richly decorated crozier, and then the Bishop himself, wearing a mitre blazing with jewels, and a splendidly embroidered dalmatic.

Marching on with a proud step, the prelate was followed by a cross-bearer, carrying a large silver cross.

Then came the penitent, carrying in her hand a lighted taper.

Her profuse fair tresses were unbound, and streamed down over her shoulders. Her feet were bare, and her only garment was a white kirtle, that scarcely sufficed to conceal the exquisite proportions of her figure.

Exhibited in this guise to thousands of prying observers, she felt a shame amounting to agony, made manifest by her blushing and shrinking deportment.

Yet she walked on, though expecting each moment to sink to the ground. Had not words of sympathy and commiseration reached her ear, and given her strength, she must have fallen.

Never for a moment did she raise her eyes. Behind her came another train of priests and monks.

Presently, the procession reached the porch;

and the Dean and Bishop having passed into the fane, she was seen climbing the stone steps with her small white feet.

She was now on the very spot where she beheld the King on her wedding-day; and the thought crossed her, and gave her an additional pang.

Many of the spectators remembered having seen her there on that day, and were forcibly strack with the contrast of the present with the past. Yet some of them declared they had foreseen what would occur.

In another moment she had entered the sacred edifice, and was pacing the cold pavement of the nave, along which moved the procession.

The whole interior of the vast fabric was crowded, and the ordeal to which the penitent had now to submit was quite as trying as that she had previously experienced.

More so, indeed; for the spectators, not being kept back by a guard, now pressed closely upon her.

From observations that reached her, she learnt that the Lord Mayor and several important citizens were present; but she saw them not.

At length she approached the High Altar, around which was collected the priestly train. Kneeling down before the altar, she acknowledged her guilt, in accents that scarcely reached the ear of the Bishop, and declared her profound repentance.

"Some atonement has now been made, daughter," said the prelate; "but your sin is not yet expiated. I have no power to remit the sentence passed upon you by the King. Arise, and depart!"

"Depart! Whither?" she exclaimed, looking as if her senses had left her. "May I not die here?"

The Bishop made no reply.

Two priests then came forward, and bade her follow them. She made no more remonstrances, but obeyed.

Pitying exclamations were heard from the assemblage as she was led through their midst, and these expressions of sympathy soon deepened into threats against her conductors.

What might have happened it is difficult to say, had not a party of halberdiers, headed by an officer, met them, and taken charge of the penitent.

Placing her in their midst, the halberdiers conducted her to a side door, where they detained her for a few moments while the party of archers previously referred to was drawn up.

They then led her to Paul's Cross, so that she could be seen by the entire assemblage.

A trumpet was then sounded, and proclamation made by an officer, in the King's name, that Jane Shore, having been excommunicated for her sins, none were to afford her food or shelter, on pain of death.

A like proclamation was afterwards made at the Cross at Cheapside, and at other places in the City.

Parties of archers were likewise ordered to patrol the streets during the remainder of the day, and throughout the night, to see the injunction strictly obeyed.

Meanwhile, the crowd had been dispersed by the archers, and Jane was left alone, seated on the lowest step of Paul's Cross, with her face covered by her hands.

VI.

EXPIATION.

A ~~flash~~ voice at length aroused her from the state of apathy into which she had sunk, and, looking up, she beheld a mounted archer.

The man had a savage aspect, and seemed wholly unmoved.

"You cannot remain here longer, woman!" he said. "You are in the way."

"I know not where to turn my steps," she replied, despairingly. "I have little strength left. All will soon be over with me. Let me stay here to the last."

"Paul's Cross is not a place of refuge, but a pulpit for preaching," he rejoined, "and good folks will come here anon to listen to a sermon from the Dean. The officers will then drive you hence with stripes, if you go not willingly."

"May I not return to the Cathedral?" she implored.

"The doors of all churches are closed against you. Bring not further trouble on your head, but begone!"

He then rode back slowly to his comrades, two of whom were stationed at the gates of the Bishop's palace.

Three others kept guard on the eastern side of the enclosure, which was now completely deserted, except by a few priests.

Groups of persons, however, were collected at the corners of the streets leading towards the Cathedral, watching the penitent from a distance, and many pitying spectators were gazing at her with tearful eyes from the windows of the surrounding habitations.

But none dared help her—none dared come near her. The few who made the attempt were quickly driven back by the guard.

Father Lambert desired to offer her religious consolation, but was not allowed to approach her.

For several hours she wandered through the streets, scarcely knowing whither she went. The guard followed her at a distance, and forced her to go on. Her feet were cut by the sharp stones, and left marks of blood on the pathways. But the guard allowed her no rest, and suffered no one to assist her.

Completely worn out, at length, she attempted to enter the Hospital of Saint Mary of Bethlehem, in Bishopsgate Street, but was rudely repulsed by the porter, and fell senseless to the ground.

When she fully regained her senses, which was not for a long time, since no means were taken for her recovery, she found herself lying beside a cross in a field, outside the City walls.

The spot was solitary, and she had been taken there to die undisturbed.

For this good office, by whomsoever performed, she felt thankful. That her sufferings would soon be over, she doubted not. Never since she quitted the Tower had food passed her lips. The bread and water in her cell at the Bishop's palace were left untouched. The duration of her punishment was thus bridged.

But she felt not the pains of starvation. Her strength was now nearly gone, and her faintness and exhaustion were such that she could not raise herself, though her desire was very great to kneel down at the foot of the cross.

But she could pray, and she prayed constantly and fervently.

Night had come on, but the pale glimmer of a crescent moon showed her the ancient walls of the City, with a fortified gate in the distance, and a monastic structure close at hand.

From the monastery came the sound of a

hymn. She listened to the strains, and they greatly soothed her.

At length the solemn chant ceased, and the lights hitherto visible in the windows of the gray old pile disappeared. The brethren had retired to rest.

No: the gate opened, and a friar came forth, and took his way slowly towards the cross.

A thrill passed through her frame as he stood beside her. His hood was thrown back, and the moonlight revealed the pallid countenance of Alban Shore.

His features wore a pitying expression.

"Do you receive your sufferings as a penance justly inflicted by Heaven for your sin?" he said. "Do you truly and heartily repent?"

"Truly and heartily!" she murmured.

"Then may heaven forgive you, even as I forgive you!" he said.

She pressed his hand to her lips.

Ere many minutes her sorrows were over, and Shore was praying by the lifeless body of the erring woman he had never ceased to love.

THE END.

THE
TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE.

IN defiance of my conscious want of adequate ability to translate a vernacular work into English at least to the partial satisfaction of the intelligent readers I am influenced to undertake the task from a desire of warning the public against the evil of the pleasures of the nuptial enjoyment in the decline of life, as the wife of the age like Satan in the paradise is always, often and invariably found to tempt her husband, despite the superhuman height of his wisdom into every folly or vice, howsoever formidably bad might be its nature.

The wife of the age ought to be dreaded more than the enemy of mankind in the paradise, as the latter notwithstanding his almost almighty power dared not appear before man at first from a thorough conviction of failing altogether in his attempt for ever and anon, so he prudently attempted upon the frailty of the sex, whereas the former does not hesitate at all to fall upon the superior strength of hundreds and hundreds of Adam without failing even in one singular instance.

"A wife is a bosom serpent, a domestic evil
A night invader and a midday devil."

It does not require any proof to illustrate or confirm the fact mentioned above about the evil of the pleasures of the nuptial bed in the decline of life, as it is some thing no less than axiomatic truth.

There is no wrong howsoever wrongful might be its nature, which can possibly intimidate man to venture upon what is suggested by the diabolical advice of the wife of the age.

Every section in each chapter of this book carries along with it the force and proof of the fact as stated above.

Several omissions are made for which the translator expects pardon, as he did it purposely to beguile the tedium of reading over the same monotony in a new or modified form without being able to make the generous readers relish any new delight in a new or modified form.

Something is added also to serve the purposes of notes, not with a view to fatigue the attention, but to enable those who have not the fairest knowledge of the idiom of our vernacular and such indulgence is expected as well to be far-from raising the resisting feelings in some readers of critical turn of mind.

This story is so very pathetic throughout, that those who take delight to pass their time in study, some times for their own good, and at others for the benefit of the pigmy writers by pointing where their errors lie, are particularly requested to read it whole and entire so as to encourage the poor translator, and most of those, who out of a sad want of self-confidence suffer their own natural parts to smother into death in their very embryos.

But as for reconciling the apparent incongruity of a father's inhuman conduct towards his own begotten children I would advise all for satisfaction's sake to peruse that chapter of the Roman history which treats of the inhuman judgment of a father towards his own son, although he was not influenced to run into through the advice of the wife of the age. Whatever might be the reason, the main fact is that sons are occasionally found to fall the unfortunate victims of their father's diabolical anger.

There might be found here and there wrong spellings, as well as other grammatical blunders for which the generous public are requested not to find fault with the translator as he should have been most likely in the chance of deferring, the publication longer and longer, and thereby would have

tired the patience of his patrons, friends and others who feel themselves interested in his welfare, and who are never niggard to give him the highest encouragement, whenever he feels any sort of difficulty in respect either of financial matter, or some other want of the similar nature though they expect no other return than the benedictions of gratitude.

The mistakes are to be corrected, altered or amended hereafter in the second or the revised edition.

To acknowledge on the one hand the utter incapacity of executing the task in question, and at the same time to venture upon the same may possibly induce persons of hypercritical predilection to attack the translator with the fury of the wasps, when their hive is set on fire, but on the other hand like burning coal may at once be cooled being dipped into a large basin of water, when they would come to learn, that the desire of the translator is far from making a parade of his attainment of a common place level, but simply "to accustom himself betimes "to carry a calf, if he thinks it at all a glory to him to shoulder an ox in after-life."

To swell the bulk of the preface unnecessarily would be of no other consequence than to tire the patience of the public in general, so I think it better to pray them and the learned author of the original work again and again ere I finish it for two particular reasons and they are these:—

In the first place I would request and continue to insist upon the public to hold every encouragement, although I have failed to retain the beauty of the original and thereby exasperated their feelings to the same extent as one would have done in his endeavours to murder the author.

Secondly or lastly I would pray the author to pity me, as by great many blunders I have injured myself which is tantamount to suicide and he who commits such a crime may assuredly expect greater latitude of indulgence from all around him, though his failing is more of an aggravated nature, than murderers and others, simply because man often

and invariably runs into such a misfortune not out of a principle to injure his neighbour or himself but out of despair, at a moment of life when he sees, that a gloom is cast all over the habitable parts of the world and when he thinks that to hope relief then is, "to hope against hope."

In giving me the permission the author has laid me under a debt of obligation which I shall neither be able to clear nor even to cancel a portion of it.

BIJAYA-BASANTA.

A TALE.

. CHAPTER .1.



THERE was a certain hermit in days of yore, who related the following story with a view to convey lessons of morality to the minds of the uneducated masses, who would have been incapable of appreciating its intrinsic importance, had this been attempted (as some imagine it should have been) philosophically.

There was in ancient time a country still in existence named Joypore, so called from the name of the Rajah Joy Sen, who then reigned there. His uncommon might and influence kept all other Indian chiefs in awe. He established schools and colleges for the encouragement of learning, built temples for the worship of the countless pantheon of Hindoo divinities, in order to promote the interests of the country-religion and founded hospitals for the good of the poor in general without distinction of creed, or caste, which made the people so happy, that even the proverbial glory of Ram Chandra* was eclipsed. The name of the queen consort of Rajah Joy Sen was Hembati, who was much in favor with her lord.†

* This Ram Chandra became incarnate in the third epoch or Tretayog, according to the historical authority of the Hindoos. The chief object of his mission on earth according to the Brahminical hierarchy, was to enfranchise man, as well as the inferior deities from the despotic rule of Ravun, the most awful king of Ceylon. It is impossible here to enter into a lengthened description of Ram Chandra's physical proportion and immense strength, as this is apart from our present purpose and would occupy unnecessary space.

† Alluding to her husband.

The gracefulness of her person was no less than the accomplishments of her mind. In point of chastity, she equalled our unrivalled Sabitri.* She was as inseparable a companion of her husband as a shadow to a real living being. She stooped to every thing, howsoever inconsistent it may appear to her dignity as a great queen, if that in any way be beneficial to her people. Consequently we see in her the traces of every virtue, which adorns the whole womankind and by the paramount influence of which a woman may become the object of admiration to her lord and superiors, in defiance of the follies and foibles, which characterise the sex in all ages and climes. As the sky fails to support our sight with transports of joy, with the twinkling light of the myriads of stars in the absence of one emparadising moon, as the trees ache the eyes, notwithstanding their surprising growth with all their tender twigs and branches together with leaves and blossoms without fruits, so was this favourite queen failed to please her lord, without being able to bring forth a child in due time. One evening of the full moon-night in autumn, when the prince was walking at random on the roof of a large hall for the enjoyment of pure air of higher atmosphere in company with his unfortunate lady, when the moon was rising with all her splendour, when the larks of both the sexes were soaring aloft with joy and ecstasy, when the lilies seemed apparently like animated beings

* This Sabitri once went to walk before her marriage. On her way she saw one Satyaban, the beauty of whose person struck her so highly, that she resolved to marry him, though her parents and others seriously objected it, as it was mentioned in the horoscope, that on the seventh day, after his marriage, he shall die. Despite all these drawbacks, she married and according to the scientific precision, he expired, but when Pluto came to take away the dead body, which was then in her lap and which she did not yield up, so was Pluto compelled to push the matter to the notice of Brahma, the chief diety of the Hindoo mythology, who in his turn convened a council, so as to adopt a method to carry away the dead body without touching her, for to touch a chaste woman is to offend her and thereby to incur the resentment of all other dieties. She was told to ask any favours she liked, with the exception of her husband's life. She on her part prayed for a blessing of being the mother of hundred children and her prayer was granted, as the dieties were bound by previous promise and thus she restored the life of her husband by the influence of the power of chastity.

staring at the unrivalled beauty and splendour of the sovereign of the broad firmament, when the reflection of the moon-light over the green leaves of the trees around made a most delightful scene, besides the twigs of the vegetable productions seemed to hail the approach of the spring. This captivating scene suggested an excellent idea in the minds of both the prince and the princess, respecting the infinite mercy and goodness of the providence of God of heaven. Whilst they abandoned themselves into the hallelujahs of that being, whose almighty fiat brought every thing into existence, then was heard a Brahmin lad cry from a little way off the kingdom. His mother pointing her fingers towards the moon, spoke thus. "Cease! My dear son! Cease to cry! Look at the moon, with what accelerated strides is she coming down to take you away from my fond embrace." The boy instead of being afraid, began to cry louder and louder. His mother again after the fashion of the east, proclaimed thus. "Come! Come down! Moon of the firmament, come and give my son a *chee*.*" When the flirtations of her hand indicative of maternal affection to console her son reached the ears of the king, he at once melted into paternal affection and began to contemplate the effects of sin of not being blessed with a son. But to give vent to his sorrows, he uttered thus. "Ah! what do I hear! What a sweet sound it is! How very agreeable is the voice! It caused my heart to dance with joy. What an infinite fund of mirth does he enjoy, who by the salutary effects of a previous life† is destined to relish such a pleasure, which none can taste from the possession of throne, or from the enjoyment of a pleasure which proceeds from the cultivation of science, or that which comes out of the hands of Muses, as the inarticulate voice sounded so agreeable to me, though not the real father." The bishops and prelates of the East have said it openly in their religious books and tracts, that without a son, a man is to languish into Poonnam.‡ This is the reason, that a Hindoo

* Means in our vernacular a blessing (ei) Come and bless him, so that he may no longer tease any one by yelling noise.

† The natives believe the doctrines of the transmigration of souls.

‡ One of the seven Hells. According to the authority of the Hindoo Shastras, no man can get rid of his sins either of the present or previous life without a son.

female, through whom her husband becomes the father of a son, gains entire ascendancy over her lord. A mansion without a child is as useless, as eyes without pupils, as rooms without openings to admit air, or a man without knowledge and its concomitants. As seas and oceans are useless to man in consequence of salt water, though hold the richest and most valuable diamonds, pearls and baubles of all and every description, so is man without a child with the possession of all other blessings; such as the vaunt of pedigree, wealth and some such as may stimulate even the princes and potentates with sentiments of emulation to compete. A barren woman notwithstanding all the peculiar gifts of God, one of which alone might raise us to a higher platform of human bliss, is as much disregarded as Palas.* The king spoke all these without aim or end, with an air significant of mental uneasiness. However, all these expressions touched the queen to the quick, who at once as it were began to sink deeper and deeper into the sea of misery, so went away abruptly from the king without uttering a syllable. The king stood therefore a long while and was thinking of the harsh language, which touched the queen the moment it was emanated from his lips, so at last he entered his bed room with all the oppressive weight of remorse. The queen sat on the dirty floor with neither a velvet nor even a second-hand mat, touching her eye-brow with her left-hand, as is usually the case with mortals under the influence of sorrows and began to contemplate of her wretched lot. Streams of waters dropped from her eyes. The sad and woeful sight of her, then under that posture may persuade us to believe, that fortune herself by the wonderful combination of circumstances having left the delicate bed of the lotus, took her seat out of despair, beneath its thorny part. She felt asleep insensibly in this posture and dreamt a strange dream a little before the break of day. It is to this effect, that a benedictine monk, having stood before her bed, gave out the following in a very mellifluous and harmonious tone. "Daughter! Be not sorry any more. To emancipate you from the life-destroying sorrows and remorse, I have brought thee two fruits, which mortal eye can seldom see without devout pater-noster. Having said this, while extending his right arm to put

* A most beautiful indigenous flower without scent.

them in her hands, she suddenly awoke and began to stare on all sides with disconcerted countenance, but could see nothing, except that her person became extremely cold by the refreshing breeze of the dawn and saw her body on the very same floor, where she was brooding over her ill luck, before she slept there. She having risen forth with all the trepidation of hurry, called her pet nurse Santa and related all the particulars of her happy dream. Santa was an old, and sensible woman, so was able to appreciate the promise of the happy omen and addressed the queen with all the demonstrations of joy. "God of Heaven seems to have vouchsafed to supply you with the fruits to realise the effects of dream. Now prostrate thyself before Sustee* and offer your best prayer, so she may not be unsparing in her almost almighty efforts to verify the dream, which promises to make mortals happy both here and hereafter." Whilst the whisperings of such a glad tidings were going on in the Zennanah, some how or other it was pushed to the notice of the Rajah. As misle or a few drops of rain animate the swallows with hopes of larger drops after utter dryness, so was the heart of this king elated with this distant promise of success with joy, though was in a manner despaired of being the father of a son in the winter of life.

Oh ! Children of humanity ! Man is destined neither to enjoy an uninterrupted course of happiness, nor to suffer perpetually, (i.e.) he becomes an object of sport to pleasure and pain alternately. Therefore it behoves us to fight the battles of life with fortitude, the best arms against the evils of life. The tree of patience beareth good fruit is a proverb verified in our Maharajah's case. In the decline of life he obtained a blessing through the sovereign virtue of patience and perseverance. Shortly after the queen became pregnant. A few days elapsed again, when the Ranee was in labor, the Rajah almost in a fit of madness walked at random without end or aim, being ignorant of the result. In the meantime seeing a maid running with the celerity of a wheel, asked her with much concern. "What's the cause ?" "What about the matter?" But she not being able to answer quickly, said this only with

* A goddess entrusted with the care of children and holds power to kill, & make them ill or lunatic and so forth.

difficult breath. "Ah Maharaj!" and paused a little to breathe anew, which of course created a bad impression into the mind of the Rajah, who by virtue of excess of love stared at her face taking all to be an ill omen. The maid after a little rest gladly spoke, that His Majesty has been blessed with a handsome babe. His Majesty being exceedingly pleased with this happy tidings, presented a most valuable chain of gems and jewels to the maid, who brought him the life-giving news and then entered the Zennanah. Having at first observed the face of the new born child, he felt a pleasure, that spontaneously arises into the human breast, on such an occasion. Subsequently he saw the face of his long wished son with fixed attention and nothing could exceed the hilarity of his mind for the time being. Each time he saw the boy with fresher and fresher rapture. The more he saw, the more he wished to see the changing beauty of his tender person with increasing thirst of pleasure. The image of his son began to be engraven in his mind. When the pleasure reached its topmost goal he proclaimed thus, "I relish the same pleasure this day, which mortals eagerly wish to enjoy in the midst of cares and worries of life, which imbitter it, notwithstanding the enjoyment of all other happiness, without a child, in whom owes the salvation of our forefathers from sins of commission as well as omission, according to the dictates of Hindoo religion of course, wherefore I see hardly any man so happy as I am this day. According to the time-honored custom of the country and the established usages of his ancestors, he celebrated every ceremony in due time. From the exquisite beauty together with perfect symmetry of his person, the priest gave him the name of Bijaya Chandra. When the boy grew a little, so as to be capable of receiving instructions, the Rajah ordered his prime minister to erect an educational edifice in the middle of a garden, within the compound of the palace. Agreeably to the royal order, the prime minister sent for engineers to build a splendid school-house. In course of a few days the college-building was completed. At length, the Rajah entrusted a man with the care of his son, whose affability and a disposition to keep up temper always and under every circumstance, whose exemplary conduct, unyielded integrity, under unresisted temptations, in fine, whose sound principles of morality could command respect of his pupils.

All other high and elementary schools were incorporated with it. Learn hence! Children of humanity! To what an awful, extent the character of a tutor is indispensibly required to be pure and uncontaminated. In the absence of these rare gifts of nature, no man could successfully discharge the ennobling duty of a preceptor of a prince. Every feature of a pupil's conduct is or ought to be mere reflections from his teacher. Let me illustrate one instance merely to corroborate the purport of the simile mentioned below. If gold and copper be put together at the same time and at the same place, the former often, always and invariably catches the reflection from the latter, whereas, the latter has never been found to receive the color of the former.

“Seek you to train your favorite boy :

Each caution and every care employ ;”

The University inaugurated under the auspices of Rajah Joy Sen, still revives in our memory. Once I visited the College and saw the boys were attentive to nothing, but to their lessons and the masters were busily engaged to discharge their respective duties. The teachers spoke with utmost courtesy and respect and the students one and all rose to salute me. I bade them with civility mixed with affection to sit down and they did it with an air of obedience. At length I found the boys of every class were attentively engaged in their studies in every branch as literature, philosophy and theology. Science and arts were not neglected in the least. Besides I saw the maps were hung, the pictures of those poets, who have acquired the highest celebrity throughout the world. On the top of the wall were hung the pictures of voracious birds of foreign and native lands in glass cases. On another side the busts or statues of Valmick,* Byas† and Poras-

* This person is the author of the great work named Ramayan. He composed it some thousands year before the birth of Ram Chandra. He used to feed his wife and children by high way robbery. His own immortal work is referred to for the perusal of those, who are curious to learn, how was he reformed and became so very pious afterwards.

† His another name was Daipayan which signifies in English an island, where he was born of a woman, who had been held in the womb of a fish. He was a boy of fourteen years, when he was ushered into the world, so far goes the fabulous account of his birth.

sara* and other great personages of highest note of ancient time. These persons did honor to the country where they were born even at this distance of time. He who would suddenly see them, may unquestionably take them living beings, sat there purposely to teach the children. Were we to cast our eyes towards the library, we see there the world instructing works of those men. At a distance of some paces only from the school premises there was a gymnasium for physical exercise. On the south of the school was situated the museum department and on the north arts were taught systematically. Bijaya within the compass of some years made himself well conversant with all the branches of letters, philosophy and theology. The teachers and professors were pleased to confer on him the highest academical honor. The prince after having left his college life devoted to the discipline of arms and political affairs. After the lapse of a few days more, the Rane: Hembati became pregnant again, she had conceived this time Chittatos† Gandharbo and delivered him in due time. The gracefulness of the person of the new born child lighted over the whole nursery-room, as the rays of the full moon does after eclipse all over the globe. The ceremonies after the delivery were punctually observed. The Raja was as much delighted with this joyful news, as a staggering beggar gets pleased with heaps of gold, at a time, when he could gladly afford to give lots of thanks for a morsel of bread only. This child was named Basanta Coomar from the surpassing beauty of his promising feature. Thus the combination of some favorable events enabled the Rajah to pass for

* He was also a great Muni. It requires greater latitude of time and space to give a fabulous account of these Munis and Rishis, so I must stop here. However, if the readers be anxious to know all the legendary accounts of the births and deaths and other kindred particulars of those Munis and Rishis they may read the vernacular poems and histories.

† This Chittatos had reigned over the Gandharbo race at mount Himalaya, which was the abode of Gandharbo, Kinnur and Upsora and other species of beings higher, than man. Chittatos the chief of the Gandharbo race, had by the curse of a Brahmin to come into this lower region to mingle with man to expiate his crime of offending a Brahmin. As for the other particulars, we must refer to the authority of our Mahavrat to have a correct notion of Gandharbo and others.

a while very happily without encountering the least draw-backs of life. It has already been said before, O children of humanity ! That man is an object of joy and grief, hope and fear alternately. As night reminds us of the approach of day, so in like manner affliction succeeds prosperity. The Rajah was happily managing the reins of government without anxiety, when all on a sudden the Ranee was attacked with a very serious illness, which baffled the powers of the skill of the most profound doctors and physicians of the time. Day by day it began to grow worse and worse. Her extraordinary beauty began to fade away, and she began to look awkward and more and more emaciated she became every day. Gradually by the increasing violence of the disease, the Ranee losing all her usual beauty and flush of health like the flowers by the heat of the mass of fire was at last unable to get up from her bed. Last of all having felt the pangs of approaching dissolution and having called her sons beside her bed and there holding the hands of her younger son, spoke to the elder, that death itself under the form of a malady assailed me, so there is no remedy to deliver me from its cruel hand, therefore before I leave you I tell you to call me by the name 'mother' and thereby to cheer and calm my troubled breast for ever. No sooner were these words came out from her mouth, than she became speechless and then like the painted picture began to look at her sons—the eldest felt the highest regret on the occasion of hearing the bewailing tenor of his mother's language. He at last burst out into a paroxysm of sorrows and tears, which began to gush out so copiously that they wetted his breast. Basanta being too young to catch the meaning of the cries of others, began afterwards to echo their lamentations, not so much from affection, as from sympathy. At intervals, he heaved deep sighs and with piteous tone called aloud "Mother O dear and beloved mother !"

Ah what a beautiful instance of filial affection !

Every symptom of death now became obviously visible. She felt the pangs of death indeed, but she did not feel it so much, as she felt in perceiving the sorrows of her two sons, so strange a phenomenon is maternal affection. She called Basanta with tears to fly to her arms once more. "Come ! come my dear son ! Cease to cry ! Be not afraid." At length she addressed her eldest son. "Why do you suffer yourself to be called senseless and mad in behaving like babes.

You should rather have been the support and consolation of your younger brother than losing fortitude in times of misfortune which is the allotted portion of every child of Adam. Fie! Fie to you! Cease to cry, let me die happily in seeing Basanta in your found embrace." In delivering her youngest one into the bosom of her eldest son, she accosted him with words as these. "I yield you up the vital soul of my life, the best treasure on earth. He is your youngest brother and is no doubt entitled to your pity, still I insist upon you to speak with all the assurances of my honor, that you will show no lack of exertion to feed and nurse him with as much care and tenderness, as I myself would have done, if I had lived longer." Bijaya Chandra answered with tears. Mother! "whom do you entrust your Basanta Coomar How could I console him, "when he would cry." Having pronounced these syllables of sorrows mixed with affection, he abandoned himself into an inordinate fit of lamentations and outcries. The Rajah himself could not refrain from shedding tears, when he heard the mournful cries of his sons and the bewailing language of his Ranee. Santa the pet maid hearing the echoes and re-echoes of the sounds of lamentations from a little way off ran to the spot with the speed of a race horse. No sooner did she reach the place, than spoke thus in way of encouragement, so as to keep up their spirit under present calamity. Are all of you become mad. Could none of you call forth fortitude to hold you up. The Ranee is suffering a great deal from the attacks of mortal disease and more furiously from the pangs of the approaching dissolution and you all instead of trying to comfort her under such a painful position, rather aggravating its overwhelming weight to an unbearable extent by sobs and mournings. The children are ever children and may cry. But how could our wise Moharajah join them in acts of folly and madness. Does he under the loss of sense wish to get relapsed into childhood. No wonder, that these children would cry, but it is a wonder of wonders, that our wise Moharajah is acting the part of little boys by losing the presence of mind now in behaving like little boys. "She took up Basanta in her arms with this word in vernacular. Shait Shait." She spoke this

* The beauty of the term is lost in translation, since similar term we cannot find in English to correspond exactly to the original.

also Cease ! My dear boy, Cease ! Your mother would soon get well. At last she caught hold of the hands of Bijaya and said. My dear son ? You have reached the age of discretion. It ill becomes you to cry now, no body could console you, unless you would of yourself be comforted. Just look at the critical position of your mother. 'How very near is death to her' Have courage now, Courage the only consolation—the only remedy—the only cure, nay it is the best arms against all the evils of life. Observe every ceremony as befits you, being the eldest son. Make her thereby happy, both for time and eternity. Thus Santa consoled and stopped every one. The dying Ranee perceiving Santa's approach, before the approach of her death, bade her sit close by. She accordingly sat close to her bedside when she spoke her last in a tone expressive of heart rending sorrows. My much loved maid I am about to be delivered from the concerns of this world. Just pardon me, if ever I gave you any cause of offence and thereby let me depart in peace from this state of probation for ever and anon. To go further would be to make vain formality. My two boys are become yours from this day. There is none on earth but you to see and caress them, with maternal care and to nurse them up as your own. Whilst this conversation was going on, the dying Ranee having turned her face towards her lord, said thus. This maid servant of yours, have through your unbounded acts of liberality enjoyed every ease, which mortals are capable of enjoying, I am about to launch into another world and ere I leave you, let me pray your lordship with all my might and strength to forget, as well as to forgive my past trespasses. You are a most powerful potentate, so can have a paragon of Beauty again after my death, if you will so. My two boys are going to loose their mother for ever. I fear lest something alienate your affection from them. This is our last interview. No more was she able to pronounce a word. Here our Rajah heaved a deep sigh and then burst out into tears. Ah what a most beautiful instance of conjugal love ?

Gradually the air we call the very essence of our lives came out of her body and mingled with the air of the sky. The flesh and the bones now remained only. The females of the

neighbourhood flocked to the doleful spot to see her for the last. Some of them gazed so earnestly at her corpse and shed tears out of affection no doubt so copiously that they in course of falling down upon the earth, cleansed and washed her body of the dust she was laid on.

What a wonderful instance of natural love ?

Thus when the furnace of sorrows began to blaze forth in all, who were present, Bijaya and Basanta cried aloud with words as these. Mother, O mother ! What would become of us after our final separation. Here the Rajah became a mute spectator of every thing that was passing on by that time. He saw on all sides, vain and hollow in the absence of the loving consort. His Majesty not being able to determine, whether was he dead or alive, in society or in solitude, in sleepy or wakeful state, whether on air or on earth, spoke this only, as in a fit of delirium. Dear ? 'where are you about ? O my dear soul—soul of my soul. Where are you bound for without me ? I can't suffer you to go alone. If you by no means remain here, wait a little so that I may bear you company on your way to journey in a world to come. Occasionally he spoke this also. It would be an act of inhumanity on your part to be away without me, after having given me the ideal, but not the real picture of love.

A most beautiful picture of conjugal love !

"A love so violent, so strong, so sure

That neither the name of death nor art can cure."

I knew not the face of any other beauty except your's. All along we lived together in love and harmony, as yoke fellows, notwithstanding which you did not utter a syllable in way of giving last fare-well, as I stand before you in the character of a miserable delinquent and in case of being so in fact, it does not look well on your part as a loving wife towards me as a faithful husband. Besides, if ever I gave you any cause of offence I did it unknowingly for which I expect pardon. Moreover if ever I wronged you for which you remained inexorable, "what cause of provocation your children gave you ?" if nothing, "how could you with justice leave them to the mercy of chance," when they entirely depend upon you. How could you remain inexorable without casting even a kind glance indicative of maternal affection ?

"What a striking instance of madness under the bewitching influence of conjugal love?

Our wise Moharajah pronounced several other similar instances under the sense paralysing influence of blind love. The kingsmen of our Rajah performed all the necessary obsequies after the death of the Ranee. The Rajah slept in the same room, which now became a scene of desolation, though it was prior to the death of the Ranee a paradise. The more he remembered the incidents of their former flirtations, the more poignant became the grief. The Chief ministers and the courtiers prayed His Majesty with join hands not to suffer his cultivated mind to become a prey to uneasy thoughts and to impress their admonition deeply into his heart cited something which corresponds to the following lines of Dr. Young.

"All, all on earth is shadow, all beyond
Is substance, the reverse is folly's creed
How solid all, where change shall be no more."

It betrays our weakness only to abandon ourselves in such sorrows, which we cannot avert of our own accord. Vain all sublunary shows, the world is like a Theatre, where the fools put on the garbs of kings and rulers to captivate the sense of the spectators and no sooner the plays end, than they become the same fools again. Some are destined to sit on the throne, decorated with gems of every hue and description, whilst others pass there lives in perpetual woes and miseries. Some by reason of the premature end of their children, tear their own flesh in despair, others become lunatic on account of the death of their wives in the midst of conjugal enjoyment. Others again taste the pleasure after long intervals of woe, when they have the opportunity of enjoying the company of long lost or absent friends. In this way man passes the journey of their worldly career and in the end, the kings and the subjects, joy and grief all become alike. In right point of view the world is exactly a theatre. Every one is to play his own part, so in like manner we are to vanish after our part is over.

"What then is the good of being sorry or jolly"
O wise and sensible Rajah! It is beneath the dignity of philosophy and knowledge to sink under the horrors of misfortune, knowing

it being the inevitable lot of humanity. Know thyself that none is for you, neither are you for any one after you leave this tenement of flesh. It is the nature of every thing sublunary to undergo changes and vicissitudes. Consequently the sick and the healthy, people, birds, beasts and the fowls of the air, the animal, mineral and the vegetable productions are all subject to continual changes and revolutions. So if we contemplate about the inconceivable wisdom of that great Being and the harmony of the celestial as well as the terrestrial arrangement by which the whole universe is to continue its existence, through ages unknown, we are sure to relish eternal pleasure. There are very few I confidently affirm, who would not be lost in wonders, if they observe the niceties of the works of nature with the judgment eye of a philosopher. When we walk to and fro in a flower garden early in the morning, we get our sense of smelling satiated with the sweet scent of the best flowers of the season, which the Zephyr carries along with it, when we get enchanted with the mellifluous and shrill voice of the season bird, our mind involuntarily melts itself in deeds and thoughts of praise, benevolence, and gratitude of that immutable being, who is ever the same and whose will subjected every thing to destruction and continual changes. If we look at the radii of the new moon, we would see, that day by day her light grows and continues to shed purer and pure right and longer too, till the time comes again to diminish her light. "Who is so hard and unthankful, that his mind would not glow here with the highest sentiments of gratitude towards the author of all these. If we once take a minute view of the different stages of human existence, we can easily perceive, that nothing is exempted from constant changes. Man in his first stage is quite an ugly deformed and helpless creature, but when arrives at the prime of youth-hood, we fancy that the beauty of the maturity of age shall ever remain the same, or that it shall not fade away, but in the winter of life not even the traces of any of these things are visible. The jet-black hair turns grey or whitish, the skin of our brows get contracted and on the rosy-cheek we see wrinkles only, besides we use sticks when strength fails us and without teeth, we seem to have been deprived of the skill of pronouncing words and syllables correctly and accurately. Thus we see continual changes in animated and inanimated objects. Therefore to mourn over things

and persons, that are destined by the divine will to destruction, shows the want of sense and it mocks the wisdom of the wisest. If you, O wise and sensible Moharajah enquire after the reason of the premature death and decay of persons and things, you may arrive at the right conclusion, that God having given us very many mental faculties, which enable us to perceive the nice connection between man and every object in nature around us, seem evidently to have endowed them purposely to make us happy and therefore it become thus to make ourselves so by the right use of those faculties, on which depend indeed our ease of mind and comfort of body. By the right use of those faculties, we can make ourselves happy, by turning some of those objects, that providence is pleased to place naked at our sight for our use and others for our eatables by the regular mixture of the one with the other in the shape of ingredients. As for instance, we defend ourselves from the inclemency of cold weather by the preparation of things from wool and cotton and at every different season, we sow the seeds of different kinds of vegetables which at their maturity reward our toil and thereby make us happy when we relish their sweet carnal and appease our hunger. Through the almost god like influence of our mental faculties, we go up to the hills and other high grounds far above the common level, which would have been inaccessible to man in the absence of all those faculties to bring wood for the purpose of making ships and boats by the help of which we cross the seas and oceans for merchandise, which in its turn enables us to obtain every desirables and thereby make us happy. By the sovereign virtue of our reason only we are enabled to reduce into our subjection the largest and the most furious of the terrestrial animals, that obey our command without even any show of resistance and thereby make us happy. By the privilege of reason, we are also capable of knowing or anticipating the causes productive of both better and worse results. We can know as well the nature of the elements by our reasoning faculty, as to how, when and why to use them sometimes in one way and sometimes in a quite different way, as in their abuse we not only injure our health, but also hasten death. Our health improves or fades according as we use air, water, food, fire and other things temperately or intemperately. When we are ill, if we then and there neglect to administer proper

drugs our distemper increases and last of all carries us to the premature grave. But that awful death the very name of which causes man to tremble with fear, affords to give us relief, if we for a while think on the subject with deep attention and it also enables us to learn, that it is assuredly a great blessing in right point of view, for without death, how much more miserable, he must have been, who is labouring under incurable disease and how much dreadful would it have been without the hope of end and how much more aggravating would have been the nature of his pain, who by some or other mishap is drowned into the whirl-pool of a deep water, if he had to continue in that state. Death is purposely intended for our good. It relieves us from the tyranny of infinite number of pangs so it mocks man as a rational being to appear melancholy on the death of our friends and others, or any best on earth. These words in way of lecture served much to console the King. He then called Santa and thus spoke. Santa! My two boys are yours from this day. You took care of them and fed and caressed them hitherto. They are taught from their infancy to call you grand-mother in way of respectful compliment, so better continue to maintain them, as real grand-mother. You would of yourself take charge of them. It is mere a formality on my part to request you to do that. The good old Santa answered. O Moharaj! you need not be anxious on their account in the least. My prayer is that you govern the kingdom well, without suffering groundless sorrows to have access in you. What need is there of being sorry. Every thing comes to pass by the will of God. Both good and evil are the allotted portion of humanity. Santa now took her quarters somewhere out of the Zennanah with Bijaya Chandra and Basanta Cumar, the two princes.

CHAPTER II.

ONE day, when the Rajah was administering justice, a guard of the entrance gate came and stood before His Majesty with join hands and bending head according to the custom of the oriental kingdoms to announce the arrival of the priest, who is waiting the royal permission to come before in order to bless His Majesty. The Rajah forth-with gave the order, when the priest came and lifted up his right-arm agreeably to the custom of the Asiatic priests and ecclesiastics, and then conferred on him the benediction. The Rajah having accepted the flowers as the symbol of blessing spoke to him in a respectful manner to sit on a sofa embroidered with jewels. The Court instantaneously was closed with the sound of a Dundhuvi. * The ministers, members and others including the officials and the menials went home. The priest now took the advantage of this opportunity and accosted thus. "O Great and Excellent Rajah ! Since the death of the queen I deem myself reckoned among the dead. The mishap occurred of course according to the laws ordained of Heaven. Nothing can avert a fraction of it, so in vain we think of the catastrophe. Every species of injustice creeps in a sovereignty, should the kings abandon themselves always in thoughts of past miscarriage. Vain thoughts destroy the peace of mind together with the ease of our body, and moreover paralise our judgement faculty, so they should be eradicated, ere they take deep root in the soil of our mind. But man in his solitary hours after the fatigues and toils of the day becomes the companion of such thoughts in the absence of other friends to solace him, so as to beguile the tediousness of time.

* A sort of bell was in use among the ancients. It is obsolete now.

All other friends fail to make us happy, save and except a wife whose words are the most efficacious antidotes against the distemper of the mind and body. There is no chance of a man's being in the wrong side, should he have a wife, wherefore I advise you to have the hand of another girl.

"All other gifts are by fortune given
A wife is the peculiar gift of heaven ;
Our grand sire Adam ere of Eve possessed
Alone and even in Paradise seemed unblessed."
"Can he
Who has a wife ever feel adversity ?
Would men, but follow what the sex advise
All things would prosper, all the world grow wise".

The Rajah said this only, that I have the highest reverence for what you say, but in the decline of life please cease to admonish me to take another wife, who is after all —

"The dear bought curse and lawful plague of life
A bosom serpent, a domestic evil
A night invasion and a midday devil."

The chief object of marriage is to have sons and by the grace of God I am blessed with two, so it is no longer advisable to marry again. The priest being silent for a moment only repeated the sacerdotal order. O Moharaj ! Whatever you say is quite true, but that rule cannot be applied to worldly-men, for a wife is to a man, what the stars are to the sky, what the morning is to the lark, and the night is to the owl. In a word, our home in spite of every comely decorations looks homely without a wife. Fortune herself would forsake us, notwithstanding our domineering submissiveness to pay her divine homage without a wife. If a man be so lucky, as to be blessed with a dutiful wife, he would then be far above the reach of all knots and drawbacks of life. A true and loving wife does not scruple to follow her lord even to the funeral. Besides, a wife is the only relative on earth, who could save her husband from eternal perdition, by the overruling influence of her own stock of virtue. Last of all man loses every right to perform even religious ceremonies without a wife. O, wise Moharaj ! many of the powerful kings are seen to be saved by the golden virtues of their wives. Let me illus-

trate few instances conformatory of my assertions concerning the virtues of a good wife. "Who could have heard the resurrection of well known Satyaban without the virtues of his wife? Who could have heard the mighty achievements of Ram, the hero of Ramayan without the god-like excellencies of his wife Sita's ennobling virtues." When man labours under a painful and languishing illness, none befriends him except his wife. Friends of prosperity forsake him. His own begotten sons seldom come close to him, daughters sob and utter languages of sorrows from far off, but his wife in spite of every disadvantage arising from the inconvenient position of the victim, which distanced all others comes closer and closer rather with increasing tokens of love and affection to serve her husband with greater zeal and more enthusiastic ardour. She is so much an ornament to man that prosperity herself looks awkward and evidently fails to adorn our home without a wife. In a word wife is the best safeguard against the evils of life's journey. Therefore it is no way advisable to decline to marry, simply on the score of old age.

See, See! Young novice of no experience, the beautiful instances of the fidelity and the chastity of our Indian wives. Our heedless young readers are further requested to observe how the diabolical admonition of the priest triumphed over the determined resolution of the wise and sage—like Moharajah. The advice of the priest struck the Rajah so well, that at last he was agreed to the base suggestion of the priest, who then left the palace for that day. Here Santa, the faithful nurse coming as by guess to know the purport of their private consultation, asked the Rajah one day in seclusion with melancholy air. "Is it in fact that we shall have to see you again to marry in the decrepit old age? Does this, O wise Moharaj! look well on your part? By the blessing of God, your eldest son is almost become marriageable. It would be quite a pleasing sight to see the wedding ceremony of the Rajling and to entrust him with the reins of government and to devote the latter end of your life with prayers, praise and hymns of the Lord of Heaven. Then and there only you look well. What the public would think of you? Fie to you, especially as the model character. May your Lordship be graciously pleased to judge of the propriety and impropriety of

my counsel before rejecting it on the score of female advice. The Rajah listened all these with becoming attention, though he failed to follow her advice. A few days after, the priest had come again to the Rajah and accosted him thus. Every thing is ready. Your royal presence only is required. What is the good of being further dilatory about the matter. The bride's country-house is at least two days' journey hence, wherefore little earlier preparations are necessary." Our Rajah having been bound by previous promises, was necessarily forced as it were to put on the habit of a bride-groom against his own will and having ridden on his chariot went to marry with a good procession. The Rajah with his associates and other followers arrived at the place of destination on the appointed day. The Rajah according to the time-honored custom of the country was constrained to enter the scraglio to expose himself in the midst of the gazing multitudes of females. No sooner did they see the bride-groom than they pronounced these words with as much surprise, as one does when something extraordinary falls under her observation. Ah! By what mercy of God is this Reverend octogenarian* come here? Our Durjamayi is tender and quite young and at the same time handsome, whereas on the other hand, one who is decreed by the stamp of fate to have her hand is almost on the pyre and walking hand in hand with the messenger of death flattering to supply him with a fresh lease of life at least for a few days more. Another spoke this ironically in way of jokes, that Durjamayi is to this grand sire of ours, what a grand mamma is to her grand-child and some such jokes of like nature. Amidst these loud acclamations of joys and ridiculous buffetings a third was heard declare thus. In vain do you find fault with the Rajah. In my opinion, he stands acquitted of all obloquy. Wealth must have blinded the parents of the young girl.

"We pant and kiss and cling for gold,"

For gold we love the impotent and the old."

Durjay and Dumamay, the parents of our Durjamayi being

* Means a very old man. The natives ironically apply the term to children on account of their over activity, irrespective of any consideration of age, and sex.

weak—weak in respect of withstanding the irresistible temptations, must have run pell mell into such a shameful contract. What else could prevail upon them to yield up their pet daughter to one behind whom the vultures and the birds of prey are constantly on a look out. It being the turn of the fourth to give her judgement on the subject. This one who was modest, young and little more sensible, observed thus. “Why do you vent your spleen against Durjay. Temptation can tempt virtue itself. The priest defaced the face of our religion out of temptation—temptation of gold, through whose authoritative persuasions the parents of the girl were induced to marry their daughter to one, who has reached the maximum height of human existence. I have heard this celebrated maxim of Manu the immortal, from my husband, that the blind, crooked, crippled, mad and the old are forbidden to marry. The kings and monarchs punish those, who venture to act against the laws. How could a medicine cure a disease, when the very medicine itself becomes the procreator by reason of its strong virtue of a new disease? Thus the ladies and the other females left the house after mutual exchange of jokes and satires. The Rajah was wrapped in shame, when it was too late for repentance itself to yield any consolation. He should have thought on the subject before. This consideration enabled him to bear the shock till the wedding was over. Afterwards having returned to his own kingdom took the reins of government again in his own hand and did all precisely as before. Learn hence, young novice, with what potent charms the wife of the age gains entire ascendancy over her husband.

•. Bijaya Chandra, the eldest son of the Rajah, perceiving the sudden change in his father, was sensible enough to conceal his secret. One day whilst walking with his youngest brother on the roof of the palace, his step-mother observing them from the zennanah, asked Santa, the old maid, the cause of their not coming in her department. Since I am come here, they are not found to enter the zennanah even for a day. I wish to feed and nurse them as my own, should you permit me. Santa answered, Madam! They are your own children, you can take care of them, without waiting any one's order. I am merely a servant. Let me go and send them

here. Durlatha, the maid of the new Ranee, who came from her father's house, over hearing the conversation between the Ranee and Santa, spoke to the queen secretly. O Durjamayi ! It appears, that there goes good deal of intimacy between you and Santa and it seems that you intend to nurse and caress your step-sons. The Ranee observed in a little angry tone. "Why do you give me such selfish and malicious advice. It pains me to the very core of my heart, so cease I tell you for your goodness' sake to mislead me. Those boys have lost their mother. I am now virtually their parent." Durlatha angrily turned her face and began to meditate, as to the method to be adopted to poison the boys against the new Ranee. After the pause of a short while, she remarked thus. "Think on the subject deliberately. What would become of you, when Bijaya would ascend the thorne ; provided you be blessed with chihreu. Do you wish them to remain as abject factotums of your step-sons ? Moreover dont you know, that though you may cherish a snake in your bosom with parental care, it would by the first opportunity as by decrees of Heaven try to put an end of you by biting you. Secondly, should you suffer a single bramble to grow-up in your garden, the whole of it then within the compass of a considerably short time be filled up with weeds and brambles." She cited all these examples with Satanic skill and stultiloquence purposely to shake the unshaken resolution of a female. It is no wonder, that female virtue would be surrendered, when such diabolical methods can easily disconcert the brain of the wisest of men. Thirdly, the bark of one tree can no way be attached to another, howsoever diligently the gardener may try, so in like manner the step-son can scarcely be expected to treat you with filial affection, although you may fondle and caress them as your own children. The young Ranee with the natural frailty of her sex, being incapable of weighing in the scale of her judgement, the propriety and impropriety of her maid's wicked counsel was at last heard declare, that she was convinced of her sad and lamentable mistakes, when it was little late. Those two boys are not (as you said) my sons, but implacable foes, the sooner they are ruined, the better it is for me. The wicked maid said this in a smiling countenance. "Yes, my dear madam ? You are now a right one in the right place. I

never did wrong even to any of my antagonists, my whole life is spent in benefitting all around me indiscriminately."

Here a most beautiful and striking instance of the frailty of the sex on the one hand and their shrewdness of a most shocking character on the other. The maid added further ; " No need of being hurriedly purblind about the matter. Pray hear me and you are sure to succeed very soon. When those boys would come to you with Santa to pay you homage, better show your indifference there, consequently, they would of themselves be away from you when you may put aside your ornaments and lie down on the dust. When the Rajah would come in to enquire after the matter, answer thus with tears. Your too naughty boys beat me so severely, that I think it better not to survive the insult even for only a single jot of time. This would unquestionably cause the all merciful God to vouchsafe to help the helpless." When the Ranee was thinking on the diabolical counsel of her naughty maid, the two brothers come to her with their nurse to prostrate before her. She said nothing, rather betrayed every token of malice not alien to step-mother till they disappeared. Santa perceiving a momentary change in her instantly went away with the boys. After their departure, the Ranee tore her own cloth into pieces, put aside all her ornaments, and made a visible mark on her fore-head and began to cry almost in a leaning posture, when her loose and dishevelled and jet black hair screened the part of her face in the same way, as fragments of clouds do to the sky. She answered none of her maids when they came to know the matter. The Rajah observing the Ranee in such a sad attitude, stood motionless like an idol for a time. Man in general becomes uxorious in case of the disparity of age and our Rajah being old and at the same time of an hen-pecked character, made himself a mere tool in the hands of his young consort. He asked the cause of it with all the trepidation of a mad man. But the Ranee answered nothing, rather began to cry in a louder and louder tone. The Rajah having caught hold of her hand, made her sit on her couch and with one end of her cloth wiped the dust of her body and tears of her eyes. "What happened My dear ! What must have come to take place so unexpectedly What misfortune must have befallen you, or any of your relatives or some one out of folly ventured to offer you any insult ? Lay open

your case. I shall make the culprit feel the consequence. Whoever he may be, even my own begotten son may, neither expect exemption, nor remission from condign punishment." The Ranee anticipating the inward workings of her lord's mind answered with a dissembled air of crying tone, "Your two sons having this day abruptly entered in my apartment, showered upon me volleys of opprobrious language and at last beat me so mercilessly, that it requires no interpretations, since every mark on my back is an evident proof of the fact, I wish not to see the light of the sun again. The watery-grave so far I am capable of judging is the best remedy against such a calamity. You may then happily govern the kingdom with your favourite sons. I am no way related to you and what enjoyment could you expect from an alien. This spell-like language like intoxicating liquors at once bamboozled the royal brain. The Rajah immediately sent for the guards and strictly told them to put the two boys in custody for the night and in the morning due punishment is to be inflicted. The guards immediately went away to execute the royal order. Early in the morning next, the Rajah ordered those princes to be bound up. There was none but Santa, the old faithful nurse to pity their case. She stood, behind the Rajah's bedroom with a definite view to overhear the conversation between the Rajah and the Ranee. When she heard the inhuman sentence passed, she fell to the ground in a fit of swoon. A little after having recovered her sense observed thus. O inhuman God! Is this come to pass by the decrees of providence! O virtue art thou fled from this world of injustice. Do you shut also like frail humanity your eyes against the destitute and the helpless. Ah! what a sad thing is this, that my life is at full stake on the shore, after having safely crossed the boisterous waves of the deep ocean. What is the remedy? Neither God of Heaven is in fault. Every thing is owing to my misfortune, otherwise it could not have been my lot to suffer all the days of my life for others, more than I would have felt for my own sons, simply because they to clear the debt of obligation regard me no less than mother. The greatest hope which warranted me to undertake the charge of the Rajahs is at once blighted. Santa then went close to the princes with a very melancholy face. Those two boys were so very young as to ask her the cause of her doleful appearance as they were not till then aware of the matter

which threatened them with danger, no less than death itself. "Why do you cry this day." Santa answered. My dear children ! What ails my mind is what exceeds my power to describe before you, so hard a task it is, that the very utterance shows the obduracy of our heart. Your step-mother stung you so secretly and fatally, that I see no antidote against the life-destroying poison. although you yourselves are not aware of the sad catastrophe. I repeatedly forbade your father to marry but still he married that monstress without the least heed of my counsel. The dangerous suspicion I so long anticipated of your lives is this day realised. How very happy must you have been by this time, had he not rejected what I said about the dangerous consequence of getting married in the decline of age on the score of female advice. He did not remonstrate respecting the justice or injustice of her malicious instigations against your conduct towards her. You will be put in custody this night and to-morrow morning you will have to launch into eternity. Ah ! What a sad calamity this must be ! What ill-fated hour must have brought this misfortune ! I see none—none on earth to befriend you in your last hour. Every one from the highest ministers, officials, down to the pampered menials is for the Rajah. They are all a set of flatterers and sycophants. They only echo the sound of the Rajah and quite heedless as to its harmony and dissonancy. They are destitute of the sense of justice. I won't see you any more after this night. No more shall I hear the harmony of your somewhat inarticulate accents. No more have I any chance of holding you in my fond embrace. Come ! Come ! My dear boys. You are to me as valuable as pupils to the eye. Come once more to these arms for the last. Santa pressed both the brothers closer, and closer to her affectionate arms with more and more eagerness. She pronounced the following with unsullied tears of maternal affection. My dear Bijaya, your mother was after all a lucky woman. She survived you all. She must have given me the charge of her sons to avenge the wrongs of a previous life. She enjoyed all the sweets of life. Whilst I alone and single handed have to bear all the oppressive weight of misfortune. After this, she accosted thus to their mother, the late deceased Rani. O visible type of chastity ! Where art thou now. The lives of your two sons are now in inextricable jeopardy. They are now entirely at the mercy of their step-mother. Ah ! How

could you now shut up your eyes against them in times of extreme peril.

“ O death? where is thy sting.

O Grave? where is thy victory. ”

I am frequently invoking thy almost almighty power to release me from the cares and worries of this life, but thou remainest inexorable. Is then poverty a crime, so abominably hateful a crime, that even death, which irrespective of any consideration of age and sex carries away all, detests to come to me in spite of my best prayers! O earth! my bosom is burst under the heavy load of calamity of the worst type. Once out of favor open thy breast, that I may enter there for shelter—shelter from the darts and agonies of this world of woes. O lightning! Thy force is sufficient to break the steeple of the highest pinnacle of the mountains into several fragments, but failed to make any impression in my breast, though fell with the greater force. Does time destroy your might likewise? How hard is my lot? What further hope of happiness could induce you to lodge in this iron frame? Ah! How comes this about? The most extravagant dream can seldom conceive even, that Bijaya and his brother would have to encounter so hard a lot! O monstrous step-mother, I could not anticipate your poison like behaviour, with nectar like language. O miserable wretch! You ruined the royal family at once, without casting your eyes to the amiable look of virtue. Whilst Santa was lamenting her fate with those words, the guard appeared with the ferocity of Pluto* himself and stood before the threshold. He was corpulent in proportion to the height and breadth of his body. To add to the fierceness of his stature he had the Ethiopian color of the body, the scarlet color of the eye, and a large and hollow nose, had a piece of red cloth on his waist, a shield on his back, a sword in one hand and a long piece of rope in another to bind the Rajings. All these added so much ferocity to the savage look of his person, that on a sudden, he might be taken to be supernatural. It is no wonder, that such a ferocious appearance would strike terror in human breast, when the wolves and the lions, the most tremendous and powerful of terrestrial beasts forsake their native forests for protection

* Pluto,—god of death.

elsewhere. The people of that profession are cruel by virtue of their duty and much more so, when authorised by royal order, so they began to abuse the princes without the least qualms of conscience. Bijaya being bigger, was consequently little more sensible and therefore he began to tremble as he heard of the insolent and upstart tenor of the tone of language of those low people. His two eyes were filled with tears, his voice became thickened and the color of his face began to fade, just as the sun diminishes by the touch of Rahoo.* What misfortune is, he neither knew nor had any idea of it before, consequently his mind was bewildered. Fortitude herself with all her encouraging prospect fails to uphold the best of her votaries under similar circumstance. Bijaya being out of fear, unable to answer the tyrant, stood motionless. The guard without further delay, entered the room with insolent audacity common to the menials and when about to extend his hands to bind the boys, the eldest spoke with trembling tone. "Well Zemaddar!† For what misdemeanor did you come to execute the basest order? We did not knowingly offer you, or any one in the state any wrong, neither did we mean any harm whatever. But if our father being offended without any cause of provocation, have issued the mandate to put us in custody, we are ready without your using force to follow you to the jail. Why do you aggravate our pain by binding us? The ensuing morning we are destined to fall sure victims into your hands. Why do you then kill us a little before? If you think it right you can hasten our death, without aggravating the torture. In that case, we shall not have to suffer the additional pangs of bondage." Nogurpal‡ was far from paying the least heed to the prayers of the princes, he rather called forth all the

* Rahoo is a planet, but according to the tradition current among the Hindoo females and the Revd. conservatives a monster, who when happens to see the sun and the moon in their course through the milky way apparently seems to frighten them with his touch but they to elude his grasp begin to shake precisely in the same way, as they do by the time of the eclipse, so the ignorant people of both the sexes ascribe the event the cause of the sun and the moon eclipse, they say that the fear of losing their glory as superior beings makes them tremble.

† A Hindoostanee term signifying a guard.

‡ An indigenous term signifying also a guard.

strength of his muscles to bind the princes. Bijaya Chandra was a prince of a very delicate make so the pangs of hard bindings became quite intolerable. The copious drops of tears soon wetted his bosom and cloth. After this he thought of Basanta Coomar, who was little above the hissing-babe. No sooner did he see the tyrant, than he out of fear became almost lifeless. He then clung closer and closer to his eldest brother and spoke in a trembling voice. "Dada!* Who is he. I am become afraid of him. Take me up into your arms." Bijaya Chandra perceiving the uneasy sensations of his brother's mind, but not being able to render him the desired assistance held him by bonding his body in his fond embrace. He could not take up his brother in his arms, as his hands were bound, but gazed with fixed attention towards his brother and wetted his hair with his tears. Nogurpal was a man of the humblest pedigree, was inhuman by virtue of his birth and training, tried with all his strength to snatch away Basanta from the fond embrace of his eldest brother. Bijaya observing his power fell short of rendering any help, addressed the tyrant with the domineering humility of a slave. "O Nogurpal cease!—cease a little,—I kiss the dust of your feet. Be not hard upon Basanta.† Just see how he out of fear is clung close to me, he is shaking like the leaves of trees by the impulse of the wind. The gracefulness of his face is faded away. The incessant drops of tears are flowing from his eyes. Cannot such a sad scene move you with compassion. "Are you so miserably cruel?" Inhuman Nogurpal still remained inexorable. He rather manifested the greatest zeal to execute the awful mandate. In consequence of excess of fraternal love, he repeated his solicitations with sanguine hope of success and said again and again to the mean scoundrel. "Your hard-bindings ail me to the very core of my heart. Basanta is too tender and delicate, would never be able to suffer such hard treatment and is sure to fall dead. If nothing could prevail upon you to alter your inhuman design, then and there I request

* Means in our vernacular, the brothers and cousins of all degrees superior in age.

† Consider here, how very happy are we in being born in a civilised land and under enlightened government. A culprit of the worst type can't be treated so inhumanly here.

you to behead me first with your sharp pointed sword and after my death, you may do anything your whim may dictate, so that I may not be in pain to witness my brother's premature death."

What a beautiful and pathetic instance here of fraternal affection and self-denial?

The prayers of Bijaya notwithstanding its melting character could not reach the ears of the in-human Nogorpal. Basanta being too young, was of course very timid. He spoke to the merciless wretch with shivering tone. "Don't kill me, I am harmless. I shall kiss the dust of your feet, if you release me, so that I may fly to the arms of my nurse again." The town-band* yet remained unkind. Basanta out of juvenile temper was somewhat irritated and spoke thus, as sounds well in the mouth of a prince, in spite of its unbearable audacity. "Be off. O unkind fool! You are too ungrateful. Don't pain my hand. Release me,—if not, I shall bring everything to the notice of my father. You beat my brother and bound him, then you will pay the penalty of your folly." The town-band heard all these, but paid no heed at all. Without the slightest compunction, he bound him with all his strength. Basanta Coomar not being able to bear the pain, broke out into fresh paroxysms of shrieks, and lamentable outcries. The town-band holding the point of the rope, with which he bound the hands of both the princes, was about to snatch them away out of the town, when Santa the nurse being turned pale at the horrid spectacle, stood before the regent with tears and prayed thus, "O miserable niggard? I am grown grey in the Government service, wherefore I expect greater latitude of indulgence, and for the sake of my age and experience, you will be pleased to accede to my humble request. Relieve the princes from the bondage. To see them in such a painful position is heart-rending indeed. I am quite helpless. I entertain great hopes from them. Have the goodness not to pain them and to pain them is to pain the pupils of my eyes. They are born princes necessarily are objects of greater care and are strangers to every species of annoyance and uneasiness. You tied them like the malcontents. How very painful is it to bear this awful sight can easily be conceived than des-

The town-band means in English a guard.

cribed." Recommendation here for mercy is what the fuel to the furnace of fire. It rather served to heighten the resisting feeling in him more and more and to give vent to his spleen, he caught hold of her without any regard as to age, or sex and pushed her with such strength, as occasioned her to fall to the ground. But he confined the Rajlings in a dark and dismal dungeon. How heart rending is the very memory of the sight at such a critical juncture. Similar was the melting scene of Ram, the king of Oude, the hero of Ramayan when detained in close prison with his pet-brother Luksmun by Mokirabun, the son of Rabun, the mighty king of Ceylon. Bazanta being unable to bear the pain, spoke thus to his eldest brother. "Pada ! No more can I bear, so relieve me of the pain and save my life. Where are you. I could not see any thing. I am quite afraid. Come to me soon and hold me in your affectionate embrace." Bijaya hearing the pitiful yellings of his brother, remarked thus with tears. 'Though there is none to see us God sees us no doubt.

* He sees with equal eye, as god of all,
A hero perish, or a sparrow fall. '

Besides, there is no circumstance so miserable, which providence cannot relieve.

"The wretch, that works and weeps without relief,
Has one to notice his silent grief."

In spite of such hopes, he cried aloud, but his brother said, "what could I do ? I am bound as well. I can't get up. Better offer your best prayers to the supreme Lord of Heaven who is the father of the fatherless and the great help of the helpless. In the midst of his spiritual counsel, he fell to the ground with the loss of sense. The cast became brightened now. It appeared, that the birds pitying the case of the princes were all united to invoke the aid of the Almighty with their sweet and melodious tone. Here the Raja having come to the council room ordered the guard to bring those naughty boys before him. I am the monarch. I punish all according to the measure of their crimes and it must be a bounden duty to me to punish those boys irrespective of any consideration of blood or any thing else.

In the midst of these acclamations of rage, the eyes of His Majesty become crimson red. The wrathful look of the king con-

founded the courtiers and the members of the king's council. The guards brought the unhappy wretches before their father who cast a frowning look towards his sons. Who with the hard heartedness of a merciless ruffian, ordered them to be taken to the place of execution. He uttered this also in tone declaratory of the topmost of his angry passion. Don't suffer them to stand before me more a second. Their very sight burns me to my very heart. The more I see them, the more gets the fire of passion inflamed. The guard to ingratiate the favour of the king showed all the dexterity to execute the royal order. Bijaya the eldest of the supposed culprits touching the feet of the Raja, questioned with tears. "O Father? What heinous misdeeds are we guilty of? For what failings do you commit us to the charge of the cruel rogue to put an end of our lives, long before the approach of death. He was little recovered, whilst speaking all these. Tears incessantly began to flow with the rapidity of the flood from his eyes. No sooner were the ejaculations of Bijaya Chander ended, than his father was heard declare, not with royal, but with the unkind gravity of a savage. "O impudent guard! Why did you suffer yet these symbols of vice to stand just before me?" Bijaya was shaking with the thundering voice of his father and spoke thus; "Dear father? Take this for granted, that I am a delinquent before your Majesty, my life may be at your mercy. But Basanta did you no harm, therefore spare his life. You can't take away his without the dictates of ~~any~~ recognised rules of the laws. Pray look at him once only with favourable eye. How is he staring at like the lost calf on all sides. By the strong binding, his tender skin is turned out, whence the blood is issuing forth. He ~~is~~ disfigured by the pain, tears like inundations are gushing out from his eyes. How could you (being the father) bear this awful sight? Is mercy fled from you at once? Is your heart petrified? Otherwise, how could you (being the giver), take away his life." When Bijaya was speaking all these with loud tone, his brother coming forward to the king with a mighty cast of countenance, common to juvenile age, observed ~~that~~ with almost lisping accent, but of course with great warmth of filial indulgence. "Papa! O dear Papa! That guard (pointing his finger towards the very same rogue, who had the order to treat them so unfeelingly)

bound my hands. Look here ? Dear Papa. How is blood issuing forth from the mark of the lacerated part of my hands. None freed me from the bondage. Loose it quick. See how ferociously does that guard gaze at me. I think he would bind me again. Therefore take me up into your arms, then he can't wrong me any more." When he was about to fly to the Rajah's arms, who mercilessly drove him off and he fell to the ground. When he was so abruptly treated by his father, he cast his eyes towards all indiscriminately. There was none so devoid of feeling, as not to be moved with compassion, neither did any one venture to recommend for mercy in anticipation of ruinous results on his part. Every one secretly wiped his own tears with his own cloth and began to see each other's face almost like mute beings. The chief minister, with becoming courage and fortitude, accosted thus to the king. "Moharaj! Although these boys may have offended you, yet you can't kill them under that pretext. No Shastras can sanction it. To kill a son, is so far a heinous crime, that one guilty of it, can't expect pardon even, from the father of mercy. As

A god of all mercy,
Is a god unjust.'

Besides, the man, who is guilty of it is to subject himself to innumerable difficulties both in this world and the one to come." The Rajah answered. "They are guilty of matricide. I won't see their face again, neither could I allow them to reside in my dominion. From this day, they are my divorced sons. You can do anything with them, you think right and expedient." Having said this, he entered the *Atnanah*. The prime-minister having by the rare powers of anticipation came to learn, the motive of the Rajah, set himself to unloose the fetters and having brought two horses from the stables, gave them to Bijaya Chundra with the following heart-rending prayer. "Young prince! Be off from the kingdom in company with your brother. Otherwise, there is no safety of your life." Agreeably to the injunctions of the minister, both the brothers departed from the kingdom.

What singular instance of the power of the wife of the age to bamboozle the brain even of the wisest, so as to gleniate the hearts of their husbands even from their own begotten sons

CHAPTER III.

SANTA, the pet nurse having heard the sad tidings of the perpetual banishment of both the princes, went on with possible haste to the public road and spoke thus with tears in her eyes. Ah? what a big hope had I entertained of nursing up Bijaya Chundra with his almost infant wife after their wedding in so early an age. I thought that my long distressed mind would be at once perfectly cheered, when I shall see the eldest of the princes would hold the reins of government in his hand, but contrary to my expectation, that hope is at once nipped up in its bud. The Ram,* who was universally expected to be anointed the king, had by the reverse of circumstances to travel in the character of an exile by paternal command.

A short while after the revival of her sense, she spoke thus as in soliloquy. Ah? How could a boy of so tender an age, as Basanta, who becomes hungry, before the sun becomes powerful, who can't sleep without the tender stroke of the nurse and her sweet lullaby, who can't remain quiet a second's time without her; travel in a foreign country ~~far~~ far off from his home. O. Almighty, omnipresent and merciful providence! How could such a boy be saved from the paws and the jaws of the wild and voracious beasts, who out of natural ignorance jumps with delight to catch his own shadow, who couldn't be awakened easily and who always gets entangled with his own clothes, who gives his

* The original suffers much in translation is a well known fact proved from the above. That sentence is turned a proverb among us, when we see the occurrence of anything contrary to our expectation, we to give vent to our disappointment repeat the phrase. "The Ram, who was universally expected to be the king had to travel as an exile." The Europeans couldn't penetrate into the beauty of this proverb:

own tasted food to his superiors without the least qualms of conscience and who is incapable of observing the lines of demarkation between himself and others. After all these expressions indicative of heart-rending sorrows, Santa, the mother-like nurse made a very short ejaculation to the supreme agent in heaven for the preservation of those two princes in such a perilous position of unparalleled nature. O Lord ! Thou art the father and the king of the beasts of the forests, the fowls of the weather and the supreme Lord of the whole universe vouchsafe to protect both the minors from the inevitable hand of the approaching evil, which menaced them every smallest jot of time with sure death. Santa spoke thus to Bijaya Chundra. When you are going to leave the kingdom, what is the good of my living here with a body without a soul.* I shall accompany you, so be good enough to bear me a companion on the way. Bijaya Chundra answered with tears. Ah ! Dear beloved grand-mother !† You are too old to bear the fatigues of the journey. Our distress would be aggravated, when we shall see you in any sort of difficulty. Better go back to your own home. If our lives be spared, we are sure to see each others face again. Basanta, who was too tender to feel the difficulty yet, said,—O Grand-mother ! why do you cry ? Let us now depart, but we shall be back shortly after. Having said this he affectionately clung to her arms, as is common to children of such tender years, and having alighted from the horse, he wiped off the tears of the pet-nurse with the extreme point of his sheet. The old maid held him as fondly in her bosom for a while, but was subsequently compelled to bid him adieu for fear of incurring the royal resentment, thus both the brothers left the kingdom, but so long, the good old nurse was not entirely disappeared, they at intervals turned their faces towards her. Santa also did the same out of almost motherly affection with fixed eyes. But when the boys were entirely out of sight, the maid broke out

* Santa, the nurse was so devotedly attached to those two boys, that she took the separation a calamity no less than death itself on her part.

† They call the maid their grand-mother out of respect for her person, as she fostered them with maternal care. It is customary among us to apply the term mother and grand-mother to old maids out of the highest respect,

into loud out-cries, and spoke thus. These two lads are of royal blood. They are never seen to be away from their threshold, they scarcely know where to arrive through which way, so were forced to follow blindly their horses. The horses after having crossed many kingdoms, villages and cities, meadows and gardens, rivers and other streamlets, and very many large tanks entered into the shade of a thick forest just at noon. That forest was the retreat of the ferocious tigers, bears and all sorts of wild beasts. It is so very remote from habitable places, that man scarcely visits it. The very awful sight of the forest struck terror into the minds of both the princes. After 3 O'clock the horses stopped just close to a certain hill. The valley beneath the hill was very beautiful and delightful, as there were no series of herbs and plants, but trees of the largest magnitude being placed there in regular rows, made the place the safest retreat of the wearied and fatigued travellers for rest and the foot of one of these groups of trees was covered with white marbles. It appears from its very sight, that God out of good feelings made that place as cheerful and desirable as a throne itself is. Its chief object was to beguile the tediousness of the present and to make the passengers altogether forget the uneasiness of past labour. There was a streamlet not very large on the side of the hill, which makes it exceedingly captivating and from the top of which, the drops are incessantly falling in the shape of bubbles from the fountain, with constant zingling noise, which soothes the ears, besides the nearest objects seemed as they were ornamented with the colors of various kinds, by the rays of the declining sun. One side of that reservoir being broken, a current of the river had run, through the bushy jungle. On another side, there being a mass of stone stairs, it displayed the highest skill of the artists. Bijaya having observed this delightful scene alighted from his horse in expectation of rest from the labors and fatigues of the long and tiresome journey. He to help his brother to come down held his hand and made him sit on the step of the stone stair. The horses after being disburdened of their riders began to graze upon the tender and green grass of the plain. The two brothers having rolled a little upon the marble bed to alleviate the fatigues of the wearisome journey washed their hands and mouth and with fold hands drank

little cold water, which relieved them a great deal. Now the youngest said (Dada) where are we come to. I see here no human face. This spot is surrounded on all sides with jungles. Where is our dwelling house. Where is our old Santa nurse?

I don't see any of those things here, so I am afraid. Take me to our house. Let me see our grand-mamma Santa. I am very hungry. Bijaya having heard these pitiful tones of his brother, answered thus, with tears. My dear brother! we are no longer in the hey-day of prosperity. We being robbed of all the comforts of this world, are at once plunged pell-mell into the sea of affliction. No more think of the pet nurse. We are forced to leave her for ever. Don't cry! Come to my arms. Having said this, he held him in his arms, with tears of affection. But after a short while having suppressed his cries, said. My dear Basanta! Sit here in this place in a calm and quiet posture. I am going to the jungle in search of fruits and I shall be back very soon. Having in this way consoled Basanta, he went into the interior of the thick forest. Listen Dear children! The oft-told precept, that "misfortune never comes alone." One is sure to follow another and the one that follows is sure to be more frightful, than that which preceded. When a man first encounters a calamity, he is sure to meet very soon with series of misfortunes. Like the cloud in the firmament, when it brings rain, it soon brings with it one after the other storms, thunder and lightnings. After the departure of Bijaya, his younger had cast a fixed gaze towards the direction, through which his brother passed. By this time a handsome fruit red as blood, having fallen from a tree, close to the spot, where Basanta sat and by degrees, as by the impulse of the wind, or by the pressure of man's heel came near to in front of Basanta who then being overtaken by hunger and thirst, tasted the fruit, but immediately fell to the ground in a state of insensibility upon a marble bed. His color was instantly changed, he turned pale and his breath was almost stopped. The foams only began to issue out of his mouth. There on the other hand, the eldest was employed to gather edible fruits, but all on a sudden, he felt certain uneasiness, the reason of which, is difficult for one to make out, if he had not previously experienced the similar catastrophe.

His eyes were instantly swelled with tears. The fruit he had in his hand fell down and his mind was suddenly distracted with several anxieties or prognostics, which language is a poor exponent to describe fully. He then thought within himself, that in the midst of these calamities, something must have occurred to fill up the measure of our misfortune. Something worse must not have happened to the state, as every hope of ours has entirely been blighted of being better with its increasing prosperity. Any misfortune, that is susceptible of affecting the interests of the royalty, can seldom create such uneasy sensations in me, when I am deprived of every right of succeeding the throne. Something worse must have befallen our dear Basanta. Having said this, he returned with precipitancy and having seen Basanta from a little way off on the marble bed, uttered thus. Al heart! That which had roused thee with palpitation is actually come to pass to my ill luck. I thought this as well that Basanta being overtaken with hunger and thirst is sleeping on the marble bed and it all becomes me to harbour ominous idea in my heart. With all such cares and worries of mind, he came closer and closer, and called his brother, so as to awake him. Get up. Just get up! Sleep no more. Why are you given up a prey to misfortune. Pity it is, that you didn't take any food throughout the whole day. The beautiful color of thy face has been at once disfigured by the intensity of the heat of the meridian sun, I have brought various sorts of fruits and at the expense of the sweat of my brow. Just hold them, get up, and eat them up. But when he got no answer in return, though he called aloud so repeatedly and when he was about to hold him up in his arms, he saw the mark of the snake-biting and foams are issuing out of his mouth and he is almost breathless. The sight of this unfavourable omen and the mark of the snake-biting made Bijaya think the death of his brother, but to give vent to his passion, which agitated his mind, he cried in a tone expressive of truly fraternal affection. O my dear brother!, My dear Basanta! With this tone of pity, he fell like a plantain tree on the marble stair-case. After a short time, he took up Basanta in his arms and accosted thus. My dear Basanta! It appears, that out of contempt of your own life, by reason of the

off-hand treatment of our father, when you very eagerly sought his fond embrace for fear of the town-guard you left this world. The remembrance of that sad repulse and the unkind behaviour of our parent must have prevailed upon you to seek so early a death. I have *none*—*none* on earth save and except you. Both the parents have left me. I solely depended upon you, but you also being unkind left me. What would become of me then? Whom shall I look to for relief, when I shall be in distress. Who would cling to my fond arms? Some time after, being deprived of every sense under all such reverses of fortune, he cried again in a tone of remorse. Why are you so unkind. Hav'nt you said just now, that you were hungry. I have brought you fruits after a long and tiresome search. Better hold them and eat up. My life is quite in a perplexed state, my bosom is ever in motion to and fro with all the emotions of grief and sorrow. Extend your arms, and come to me. Call me *dada* once more and thereby cool my distressed mind. Being silent for some time, he said again in language of sorrow. You are unmindful of me, lay yourself here then. Let me seek my own way. After having gone a little way off, he said again—Basanta! Where am I going, whilst you are alone here. I am very hard hearted and obdurate. Perhaps you are afraid, just come up to my arms, after which having placed Basanta in his bosom called aloud, as in a fit of delirium, their pet nurse Santa, whom he addressed thus in a pathetic tone. He whom you never allowed to come down from your arms, he whom you often fanned with your cloth, when the little bubbles of perspiration made their appearance upon his brow, he for whom you sought the medicinal drugs with maternal cares and on whose recovery you felt yourself quite happy and he who is delicately bred up is now lain on the dusty ground without velvet bed or cushion, nay even without a second-hand mat. Come! Come forthwith and with speed, take up your Basanta and caress and fondle him. Whilst Bijaya was thus bewailing the loss of his brother, he thought within himself, that if Basanta have actually left me, what is the good of my life. I shall launch at once into the deep bed of this sea and die and thereby get rid of all sorts of anxieties, which the flesh is heir to. Having made such an awful

reflection, he thought, of plunging into the unfathomable deep where there was then a religious saint, who was walking at random and who being fortunately able to catch the latent and the desperate aim of Bijaya from a little way off cried aloud in a tone of astonishment and horror. "What are you about? What's that?" With this horror stricken voice, he came close to Bijaya and held up his hand and accosted thus. "What sad event must have bamboozled your brain so far, as to get disposed to suicide. Don't you know, that it is the most heinous crime. No atonement is sufficient to expiate even a tinge and atom of this crime."

"What must have obliterated this from your memory, that none is more a sinful being, than one, who commits suicide." Bijaya answered. "Good gods : My soul has ere-long left this world, now I am to bury this life-less body into the watery grave. How could then the charge of suicide come upon me." Being over-whelmed with grief and remorse, whilst he was talking with the saint, he fell insensibly on a stone stair just like the trees by the force of the hurricane. The good saint with all the hurry and whirl of mind held up Bijaya Chandra and consoled him, though with precepts of common place character, but all were fraught with such moral lectures, as had the potency to support Bijaya at least for the time being. The wise saint said this as well, that from the nature of the corpse I am led to believe, that he is not dead as yet. He seems to have taken either any poisonous fruits, or some other sort of food, that was placed on the plate rubbed over with venom, one or the other must have given birth to this sad event. There is chance of its instantaneous remedy. Why are you so impatient. I hope God would forthwith deliver you from the leonine paw of the present danger. Having said this, he departed, but returned very soon with the healing balm of the drugs and applied their juice to the ears and nose of the supposed dead one, who a little after began to breathe. Again sometime after, he rose up and sat precisely in the same way, as man usually rises from sleep and then said (Dada) I slept long. You have been in search of fruits. Where are they? Kindly give me I am very hungry. Bijaya embraced his brother with tears of joy and spoke thus, you were really sleeping eternally, I was also

preparing to do the same both for ever and anon, but this godlike * being took pity and saved both of us, otherwise, there was no chance of our mutual interview again. At last Bijaya having fed his brother most of those fruits, he himself ate the remainder. This appeased their hunger to the greatest extent. The wise saint having very minutely observed both the prince capapie, remarked thus, I sanguinely believe, that you two brothers seem to have relinquished the kingdom, but I am altogether incapable of forming any judgement as to the true cause of your desperate intent of coming here in this awful retreat. The sage having heard all the incidents of their lives, placed his hands to his ears and spoke as in soliloquy, that worldly men could run pell-mell into every deed under the satanic influence of passions, howsoever diametrically opposed it may be to the dictates of their inward monitor.—Nay sometimes out of extravagant fondness to gratify their whim raise their impious hands against their own begotten sons, in spite of the filial affection serving the greatest barrier in the way. The Revd. sage after this wise reflection, said. My dear! The approach of night is at hand. The ravenous beasts are sure to come here to drink the water. So it is no longer advisable to stay here. Please pass the night here in my humble mansion.†. Bijaya gladly accepted the offer of his benefactor and held his brother's arm with his right hand and with his left he held the reins of the horses and followed the wise sage, who used to live in the centre of one of the spacious cavities of the mountain. Having arrived at that place, he entered the cavity through the usual

* Alluding to the wise saint, who stopped him from committing suicide and applied healing balm to his brother and saved him.

† The original suffers by translation is a well-known fact, specially the above. Its beauty could not be retained, as the custom of entertaining the strangers is altogether out of place in Europe. Whilst here in Asiatic countries, the people gladly feed the strangers, without previous enquiry of their physical capacity or incapacity, as no virtue is so much acceptable in their eye, as the one here quoted, the wise sage was actuated not so much from a desire of benefitting the boys from the paws of the beasts as from a principle of having them at his threshold in the character of beggars. Even the worshipful Brahmins here condescend to render the offices of a menial, if they come thus in their door.

path. The more the world began to be wrapped up in darkness, the more lightsome became the retreat of the sage and the brightness resembled the broad-day-light. Whilst Bijaya was observing on all sides, he was thunderstruck with the view of a single piece of bubble, the lustre of which alone was sufficient to create such a wonder. Having tied the horses in front of the mountain, they all entered into one of its deep recesses. The wise sage offered the princes, various kinds of fruits of good flavour, which he had gathered before. After the repast, Basanta went to the bed, but Bijaya spent the greater part of the night in religious controversy in a fair argumentative model with the sage, ere he went to bed. On the dawn of the day, the two brothers seeing the sun in the east, rose and fell prostrate agreeably to the time honored custom of India. Shortly after having turned round the saint for some ten or fifteen times rode upon their horses and departed else-where. The horses had continually trot on to the east of the path that laid below that mountain. This path was very difficult, necessarily very loan-some. It was bounded with hills and hillocks on the south. On the north vast waste of uninhabitable tract of wild lands, here and there, there fell trees of the largest magnitude and stones of the highest dimensions, which made the way very tiresome to the travellers. The two brothers could neither leave behind them this road, though they worked with unremitted patience till 3 O'clock, nor find any other way on any other side. At length, being overtaken with hunger and thirst, their color was changed and they were disfigured, like the branches, which are separated from the main trunk and by degrees, they fainted and lost their usual strength so much, that they entirely depended upon their horses, as they were incapable of walking even an inch of ground. Thus having gone a pretty good distance, the horses stopped of themselves without finding any proper roads on any side. The place where they stopped was so frightfully dark, that day appeared there as dark as night itself. It was bounded on two sides with brambles and prickly shrubs and in the middle the space was filled up, with bones of men as well as of beasts. Close to that place, there was a mountain, where there was a large opening from one end to the other, which on a sudden view appears to one unac-

customed to a distant journey, the way to the subterranean world. The cave herein mentioned was in days of yore, the abode of Taraka.* In the Tretayuga,† when Ram Chandra of whom so often and so much is heard of in our Ramayan was going to Mithilanagar, was persued by that giantess, and being engaged in skirmishes, which put an end of her life and thereby the victor saved the travellers the troubles of a long and circuitous journey. Thence the passage to that famous city was facilitated. Bijaya having alighted from his horse, said this to his brother so as to rouse his drooping soul. "What made you so impatient? What fear. I am all along and always in company with you." But in defiance of his unremitted industry, he failed in consequence of the extreme darkness to find out the easy road. He then climbed upon a large tree, in order to know the time of the sun's sinking down to the west, but saw, that the brightest luminary, as it were trying to hide in the west behind the mountain, purposely to impose upon him, which made him become red with anger. Having then come down from the tree with all haste, concluded thus within himself. To-day we are sure to lay up our bones here in this horrible retreat, "unnoticed and uncared." How very akin is this sentiment to Robinson Crusoe, who in a similar tone of despair gave out, "I must finish my journey alone." We are, said Bijaya in danger this day either of being devoured by a huge serpent, or some being of extraordinary make may kill us. Whatever might be the case the fate is inevitable, we won't survive the danger. The desire of the malicious step-mother is most likely to be crowned with success this day. Ah! Pity it is, that we can't see any one

* The Mythological account of Taraka runs thus. She used to live in a forest called Kamyakibana. She was always in the habit of killing men and drink their blood. She delighted herself in interrupting the saints and the religionists of their prayers. Ram Chandra, who according to the prediction of the Hindu theology became incarnate in Tretayuga to deliver the Yagis and others from the tyranny of this giantess, killed her on his way to Mithilanagar.

† Tretayuga or the third epoch was the age, which followed immediately after the Dwapar or the second epoch. Ram became incarnate in this age to enfranchise humanity from their sins.

either friends, or acquaintances, relatives or neighbour or countrymen to speak to us anything about the happiness of the world to succeed, so as to console us in this awful hour. How very similar was the expression of late Rajah Ram Mohun Roy, who was afraid on his way to Europe by the dashing waves of the blue Atlantic. I deem it needless to repeat it here, as it has been sung so often and often by the theatrical performers and by the songsters of the common place character. The song is so very pathetic, that however old and hackneyed it may have become, we hear it every time with fresher and fresher delight, so much so that to a man of attentive and contemplative turn, it conveys his immortal and immaterial soul, nearer and nearer to the supreme agent. When he saw, that nothing promises better, he spoke the following in a sorrowful tone. " Ah ! Dear Santa ; where are you now ? We were predestined to die here in this horrible and distant retreat. You could know nothing of the sad catastrophe." Thus he bewailed, but to keep up the spirit of his brother, he didn't express all these. He rather wiped the tears of his eyes clandestinely, so that his younger brother may not know it, as that would make him more and more afraid which like fuel would add to the fire of sorrow, but without any better consequence whatever. But mind, dear readers, that face like glass often and invariably displays the secret workings of our mind. Basanta, having come to learn the shatter from the very countenance of his brother. Said. " Why do you cry (*Dada*) ? If you are afraid, just call Santa, the nurse to come and help you. No sooner would she hear your voice, than run to relieve you." Bijaya immediately stopped from crying and began to reflect, how to pass this dangerous night safely. It is no way advisable to venture the night here where danger threatens every moment without a heavy mass of blazing fire, as the very sight of it distances the snakes and other beasts, that prey upon man. The next question, that arose in his mind was. " How could the fire be had in this lonesome and solitary recluse." Sometime after, having got two pieces of dry wood, which issued flames of fire from their frisking together and the flames having caught the jungles, he was above all fear for that night, specially from the attempts of the

beasts. Thus the place became quite lightsome, when the fire began to blaze forth. Bijaya then made a bed with the saddle and the reins of their horses. Basanta being hungry and tired fell asleep on the same hard bed without interruption. The horses began to feed upon the grass and the tender leaves of the plants here and there. My dear Children! Think on the influence of the alternate rotation of the good and bad turn of time and circumstances. He whose rest was interrupted on a bed of cushion and velvet, is now capable of enjoying a sound sleep on a bed of straw. Bijaya did not sleep himself, but watched his younger whole night in anticipation of any danger. He also fanned his brother with the points of his cloth, when he saw him perspired by the heat of the fire. Thus Basanta enjoyed sound sleep, but a little before the approach of dawn, he rose up and said in a dry throat “(Dada) I am exceedingly hungry and thirsty. I can scarcely speak, get water forth-with.” His elder answered. “My dear Basanta! Where and how could I get water now? Have patience, and I shall fetch it in the dawn of the early morning. After a while nature held a stillness. The beetles and the worms commenced their croaking noise. The little drops of night dews began to shine like pearls on the tops of grass and the east appeared to have worn a deep scarlet cloth resembling blood in color. Gradually the darkness having ceased to mantle over the face of nature, when everything began to appear faintly through the ray of day light, Bijaya without further delay, first held up his brother’s hand in way of helping him to mount up the horse and then he rode himself and on their way hither and thither for search of roads. He suddenly saw one, that directly leads to Mithilanuggur. The youngest being very hungry and thirsty after a journey of some considerable distance, was obliged to fall straight on the back of his horse. It was no wonder at all. In the first place, he was a boy of too tender an age. Secondly, he didn’t receive a morsel of bread throughout the whole day and night to break his fast. He spoke in a faint tone “My Dear Dada! I am quite disabled to stay upon the back of the animal, how could I hold the reins of the horse, when, I out of weakness, arising from total starvation am incapable of standing erect. Please dismount me soon or I am in danger of falling down.

Bijaya forth with alighted from his horse and held up his younger to dismount him, after which he addressed him thus with tears in his eyes, expressive of truly fraternal affection. My dear Basanta! wait till my return and I shall be back with water, with the glance of an eye. Basanta cast a fixed gaze on the side of his brother's return. At intervals he had cried like the confined calves, that low repeatedly in expectation of the quick return of their old dams with this melting tone. *Dada!* My dear *Dada!* Where are you? Bijaya had then gone to some distance, but being unable to ascertain, which way to take and which to avoid and where the water to be had, he sat at the foot of a Tamul tree and began to weep. However, he had the good luck to see a she rabbit licking the body of her young ones. The body of some of them were spotted with clay, and others were moistened with water. Bijaya reached a large tank by treading the foot print of the animal and when he was thinking of the means of fetching water, as he had no pot with him then, he suddenly saw a large elephant running with all speed towards him by raising his trunk above his head. Bijaya with fear stood behind a tree. The elephant seeing that from a distance, directed his step towards him, when the animal came near to Bijaya, who being confounded with fear gave out thus in a pitiful tone. "Ah Jove! I am sure to die now by this elephant. My death is not at all a matter of regret, but who would relieve my brother from the unquenchable thirst in so loansome a place, where he is left alone, remote and unfriended. Ah! in what inextricably dangerous position we must have been exposed. On the one hand the elephant is coming to kill me; on the other Basanta is labouring under pangs of death for want of water. What could I do? I don't see even a single one, whom could I recommend for merey upon my brother. O just and merciful God. I pray thee with all my might and strength in my hours of death to save that orphan." Whilst lamenting thus the sad catastrophe of their juvenile career, he had fallen on the ground. The elephant then took him upon his head and went on with haste. Whilst Basanta being exhausted with hunger and thirst had fallen down as dead on the ground without strength to utter any other sound, than this in a very low and pathetic tone indicative of truly fraternal affection. "(Dada)

where are you gone to for water and for whom ? I am about to breathe my last. Happily by this time Revd. Saradwaj Muni happened to pass by the very same way and seeing the boy exposed thus, began to think within himself. This lad seems to be a prince from his very appearance, but how is he come here unattended is something, what cannot easily be accounted for. Some one must have accompanied him here, as I see a couple of horses. Let me cither him first with few drops of cold water and then I shall question him about. With this view, he brought a water pot full of water, but began at first to pour water a drop after drop in his dry tongue. The boy being thus ervived a little, himself held the pot and drank the whole water and having cast his eyes towards the Revd. gentleman, questioned thus in a very obliging air. " Who are you ? (Sir) you saved me when I was on the point of dying for want of water. Can you say, what is become of my eldest brother ? Long since he is gone to look after water for me." Hence the Revd. Sire came to know, that his brother is come with him. Most likely, he must have come to similar harm. What else could possibly detain him so long ? However it is a duty incumbent upon me to soothe this boy now. The Revd. Seer to comfort and support him under such an awful position, said in way of encouragement. Dont be afraid of. Your brother is about to be back. I shall wait upon you till then. But let me know in the mean time, what accident must have conveyed you two brothers here in this sad and desolate recluse ? The boy answered I can hardly enterpret it to your satisfaction. (Sir) My brother can fully release you there in that delicate point. Thenc the sage concluded, that there is no chance of knowing all the particulars of the sad event save and except one or two questions to the point. I must have that alternative. In the first place, he put this question. " Whose sons are you and where is your birth place ? Basanta answered, Joy Sen is my father's name, the name of my eldest brether is Bijaya Chandra and my name is Basanta Coomar, Joypore is our country house. Hence the sage concluded, that Joy Sen, the Rajah of Joypore after the death of his wife, took a second. He must have been prevailed upon through the instigation of the wife of his age to be the

author of this sad event. I must be little more inquisitive on this nice subject. So he asked thus to Basanta. "Is it that you are compelled to leave your house for the harsh treatment of your step-mother, or for the constant bad behaviour of your father through your step mother's malicious instigation." The boy answered, no no. Our step-mother said nothing about. We were in our own room, when Santa our nurse seemed to have whispered something to my brother. A little after, the town guard came and bound us both with a rope and placed us in a dark and dismal dungeon for the night. Just look here in my hand the visible mark. The Muni was astonished and affected with the very sight of such an inhuman deed. He then further asked, "What followed next?" The boy answered. The following morning, we had to stand in front of our father, who in a fit of diabolical anger gave orders to slay us. My brother holding fast his feet, began to cry, but he still remained inexorable. Then came the Chief minister to unloose the tie. He gave us the horses with instructions to leave the Rajdom without delay. My brother has brought me here. I had requested and insisted upon him to return to our own home, but he paid no heed at all. But (Sir) you told me just now, that my brother would return soon. Why is he not back yet? I am very hungry, whom shall I apply for relief? Description as this enabled the sage to know all the incidents of their lives, in all their bearings and under each of their minutiae. The heart of the holy devotees are naturally susceptible of pity, and the relation of such pathetic circumstances melted him still more easily. He then said. "My darling? Are you hungry? Just sit here for a while and I shall soon get you fruits." The boy burst out in a piteful tone. "Revd. Sire! Are you also going to leave me to the mercy of chance in this critical hour of need. What would become of me then?" His breast was wetted all over with tears, whilst he was pronouncing these words. The wise sage to console him said. "My dear Basanta I wouldn't forsake you. Please cease to harbour such thoughts. If you can't trust, or depend upon my mere words you may for your satisfaction's sake keep with you my beads,* that's the only way to

* Beads are much in use among the Hindus of all castes, specially among the followers of Krishna, who all in a body rise against him, who does not

detain me. The wise seer thus set about for fruits. After a long search he had brought good many apples, guavas and some other sweet fruits. The boy ate most of them with good appetite. The sage stopped there for a long while in expectation of Bijaya Chandra's return, but at last being despaired of his return, he spoke to Basanta. " My dear boy ! Most likely your brother's return time is over. If he be alive, sometime or other we are sure to see him. As for the present you better follow me. No sooner did he hear these words, than he began to cry aloud again. The Muni to stop him, spoke thus. Cry no more, cease to cry. Don't you hear the roarings of the tigers ? It is no longer advisable on our part to remain here. Let us leave this place as soon as possible. Basanta immediately stopped through fear. The Muni held up his arms, in order to put him easily on the back of his horse and himself trot on foot with the bridle in his hand, the other horse followed them. The Muni reached his residence by the dusk of evening. The sage had never been blessed with a child, so his wife named Sooduckhina was in the habit of caressing and feeding the children of her neighbour as her own. It baffles the power of description to insinuate into the minds of others, the joys she felt on receiving so tender and lovely a boy as Basanta, the countenance of whose face was so lovely and commanding, that a mother of hundred children would be no less anxious to discharge her duties with maternal care towards him. It is no wonder, that she who had never given birth to any child would with greater delight run to her own abode with the boy in her arms, who is in every respect the delight of mankind.* The next morning, the children of the neighbouring Munis flocked to his door for sport, but Basanta being a stranger, dared not come in front of those boys. He had seen only the wife of Saradwaj Muni in the preceding night, so he sat silent close by her. But during the intervals he remembers his brother, he used to repeat this word in a crying tone. Dada, Dada. The wife of the seer to support and soothe him, in order to make him forget his brother, used to hold him up

turn round each of those beads in his lot at least ten thousand times in course of a day. Sometimes they excommunicate him. . . . "

* The sweetest thing, that ever grew beside a human d. . . .

in her fond arms, pointing her fingers towards the calves and other objects, that can easily take up the juvenile attention. Thus when he became acquainted with the children of the neighbour and when he was at play with them, the memory of his brother gradually began to fade. Thus a few days having been elapsed, the Muni had prescribed the boy a daily task with all other children of the neighbourhood. At first, he felt as is usually the case with little boys somewhat vexed and disturbed, but when he had relished to a certain extent, the pleasures of education, he devoted his time only in the study of the learning of every thing with indomitable zeal, exemplary diligence and resoluteness. He had the double advantages to make ahead in all the branches of education within the compass of a short time. In the first place, he was born of a royal blood so he must have the acknowledged advantage of a sharp and penetrating understanding and retentive memory.* Secondly, he had the rare benefit of the spiritual and secular instructions of a religionist, consequently in a comparatively short time and with little labour, his mind became a store-house of knowledge of all and every kind. The pleasures that arise from all such rational pursuits smother into death the gratification of simple desires. What other more salutary effects of education are there, which were not found to centre in him? There are lots of people, in whom the consequence of education being counteracted degrade themselves to the level of the brutes. Besides from the very frailty of their nature, they subject themselves to falsehood, chicanery, fraud, hypocrisy, selfishness and affectedness. The religionists are entirely exempted themselves from the stain of all those evils. In society it is hardly possible to meet with persons altogether free from the guilt of the above-mentioned vices. Man imbibes all those vicious habits from their very birth and retain them through-

* Here the anglicised graduates are solicited not to open their horrid mouth with smiles of contempt as it was a custom among the conservatives to cherish the opinion to the effect, that he who gets good food, must have good head, so none gets better kinds, than the princes and consequently they must have superior intellectual faculties. Plutarch holds also this opinion and to remove the doubts, the readers are requested to turn the tablets of his preface.

out life, whilst the sentiments of truth, virtue, religious discussions, theological lectures, the principles of the virtue of forgiveness and patience are instilled into the minds of the sages of all orders from the cradle up to the time of pyre, so they easily get rid of these ruinous principles. Basanta made himself critically acquainted with all the branches of scientific, theological and literary learning not long before he reached maturity. The wise sage observing the maturity of his age, questioned him one day in way of colloquial talk, so as to learn, how far is his character immaculately pure. One day, he said. My dear child ! A Brahmin named Manuja used to walk when he was young in a state of mind full of thoughts of various sorts to gratify his lustful appetites, during which a certain mountain fell under his observation the pinnacle of which rose so high, that it seemed to have touched the firmament itself. Manuja coming close to the mountain began to walk faster and faster, but the level not being smooth he was obstructed and put to pain. However by patience and perseverance, he came close to its foot, whence, he saw, that two women* are coming down hastily from the summit of it. Of those two ethereal ladies, one had worn an embroidered cloth and was somewhat of irregular habit, but the other was extremely mild, faithful and of a modest look. She had no ornaments indeed, but her natural beauty arising from unaffected modesty served the purposes of best ornaments. This one first came with celerity and questioned him thus, by the movements of her eyes. What are you about? Manuja ! What's the good of thinking this and that? Better follow me to my straight way. Manuja being in a manner enchanted with the sudden appearance of an unknown being, observed most respectfully. Who art thou? What must be the grand object of thy mission? She answered I am an invisible being. Seeing you here confounded with the branches of two roads of diametrically contrary directions came to show you the shortest cut. The one, who is coming after me is named Sriangana, the path she is to show is so difficult, that the passengers, who follow her, are at last forced to come back with vexation. She is in the habit of holding future prospect in a most transcendent light to strangers. That is a mere

* They are properly aerial beings or fairies.

tantalising hope that is never verified, so the passengers in general wish not to follow her. But the majority knowing the easy access of my path follow me. What more could I say to corroborate my assertion than this, that the whole spacious land is thickly overcrowded with passengers, who follow me. Whilst Priangana was thus engaged to take up the minds of the passengers with false hope. Sriangana came to Monuja with slow motion and proclaimed with smiling tone. My dear Manuja I am come here to point you the road, that would lead you easily to your journey's end. You are at liberty to follow the one or the other, according as you think right and expedient. Priangana said, Manuja ! Don't suffer yourself to be led away by false promise of Sriangana. Her way can seldom yield you that ease, which you so long and so earnestly sought for. If you follow me, you will find the facility of the way I spoke to with ease and without delay. The difficulty of the other way is already described. The happiness attend to those, who follow me, is something that baffles the description even of a recondite speaker. See for instance, the spring itself is a season of perennial joys and hilarity. Besides what a new thought of boundless joys spontaneously arises in human mind from the observation of the fresh and tender leaves of trees and plants. Moreover the very sight of new-bud flowers, whence the bees* extract honey is a scene of indescribable reflection. Independently of those, when a sunburnt man enjoys the cooling breeze of the mount Sumaeru at the foot of shady trees and when he gets his ears cheered with slow and sweet notes of the country birds, how then his mind become a pleasant home of happiness. The worldly wise men having visited the first floor, then the second and the third storied room and last of all the highest rooms covered with soft beds like beds of roses, each of which being the abode of heavenly beauties, who pass their time with such delight, as exceeds the power of description and speaking, engaged in the exercises of dancing and language of jokes and funs. The maximum happiness of Sriangana can scarcely be reckoned here in

* Here the Europeans may vary in their opinions, respecting the bees extracting the honey from the sweet-flowers. They say, that it is not from the sweet, but from the most acrid leaves and petals, the bees extract honey.

the category of happiness. Who then is so foolish as to leave this present happiness, in expectation of the one, though of the rarest order, that may follow here after? Sria said in her turn. Whatever Pria has said, My dear, is not far from truth indeed. For he who closes my way is to undergo a difficulty in the first instance, as he who has not previously mastered the lustful passions incapable of relishing the sweets of the journey I lead to. The chief thing here required of man is to conquer his passions. But man adopts duplicity of manners and becomes victim to passions and out of bad nature gets deprived of real and permanent felicity like those trees, that get denuded of blossoms and leaves by the impulse of wind and sometimes storms. Wherefore every one feels difficulty to come to the way I point at, but that great and glorious soul, who forsook the vicious out of fear of the infection of the poison of sin and who by conquering the passions associated the wise men and followed the ever happy path I conduct to, can be happy on sea, on land, in society, in solitude, in the hurry and bustle of the presidency towns, in the dead of night and in the broad day-light under all circumstances, always and at all places can enjoy the pure and unsullied satisfaction, that often and invariably attends my followers. Language can seldom afford a term to express the happiness I have described. Those who have once relished that pleasure, can safely expatiate over all the plain maize of happiness I recommend to. None else can say, what it is. The advisable thing for you now, my dear, is to compare both in the scale of your own judgement. Whatever Pria has said of happiness is mere chimerical and phantasmagorian. That transitory happiness turns afterwards a source of new misery. The description Pria gave of the flowers, which expand of course in time, but fade away immediately after. What a wide difference is there between the expansion and budding of flowers and the charming youthhood of the beauties? Judge then of the felicity of happiness as described by Pria by the dint of examples. The wise Muni having gone so far, questioned Basanta Coomar thus. Let me know! My dear. Which of these two are the safest for man to hold fast? Basanta kept himself silent for a while and then answered. The happiness Pria prescribes glows with greater lustre

like common glass for a short while, but the one Sria recommends is like pearl, does not shine so dazzlingly indeed, but shines continually with unfading brightness, so man must as a gifted and superior being adopt Sria's counsel. The wise Muni having got the reply said. True it is, but the majority of people even among the learned and wise follow Pria though they pretend to show themselves in a different light, simply for the good will of the community they move into. The main purport of the latter part of this chapter is, to let us know, that people are not what they pretend to be. If all be so candid and frank, as to lay open their heart then and there a right clue can be had, whereby to decide how far the one or the other is right. Basanta Coomar thus began to grow in age, as well as in knowledge.

CHAPTER IV.

My dear Children ! Basanta Coomar under the paternal roof of Saradwaj Muni made a very creditable progress in all the branches of education in general. On the other hand you have heard so far only, that Bijaya was carried away by the elephant. Let me now relate fully, what became of him afterwards and your particular attention is invited here. The matter is so intricate and nice, that in case of a slight lack of attention, the whole tissue of events may possibly be effaced from your memory. The famous city named Bijoy-nuggur, which is still in existence, was twelve miles north west of the tank square, where Bijaya was carried away by the elephant. It was the capital of Rajah Ramani Mohan. This king had neither an awful name, nor statesman like head to equal his devotional spirit and sincerity of mind.* The name of his chief and pet wife was Susila. She made herself a favorite of her lord, not so much through the charms of her body, as by her surpassing accomplishments of mind. As man is often taken up by the sweet and melodious notes of black birds, without any regard as to the beauty or deformity of her appearance, so was this wise Rajah enamoured with the inward accomplishments of his queen consort, who had all the requisite virtues, that adorn the sexes, despite every visible mark of deformity of their outward appearance. In fine she had not at all the pride common to the princess in general. She was always in the habit of undergoing voluntarily the hardest labor of dressing the food of hundred sorts daily for such a number of people, as can consume them without the least waste. Her kind attention was not confined to man only, but the poultry and even the trees and plants shared her bounty, (i.e.) she used to see them personally every day.* She used likewise to visit personally the

* Here the Europeans may differ in their opinions. They take care of animals as well as inanimate objects out of delicate taste, but the people here in Asiatic countries do so out of fear of god, for to let die or wither those things is actually to become as much guilty before him as in taking away the life of a man, or any living being. The notion of virtue is so very keen here.

dwelling houses of all her neighbours purposely to give alms in different ways, such as hard cash to the needy, healing balm to the sick and lectures in way of admonition to people fond of pleasures, which are ephemeral and titular. Such a benevolent as well as beneficent behaviour drew from all maternal respect for her. She was never found to idle away a second's time in useless chit chat, recreations and frivolities of society. She had spent her leisure in controversial talks of various kinds with her husband on politics and the duty of the kings and potentates towards their subjects. In fact, she was a great help to her earthly lord. She had delivered a daughter in due time. After the celebration of all the necessary rites and ceremonies, agreeably to the custom, then prevalent there, the Rajah gave her the name of Bimala* from her unspotted beauty. She began to grow daily in an uncommon ratio. Her growth may justly be compared with the billows of the seas, as the one swells furiously with the rising of the wind and storm in a slight degree, so was the growth of the other became obviously perceptible with the increase of day. When the girl reached her fifth year, her mother to implant in her the principle of modesty and to create the true spirit of prayerful habit entrusted an worthy professor for her secular and spiritual training. A revolution broke out by this time from all quarters. The Rajah's own viceroys and deputies, were influenced from an impression of his weak position to head the revolution, the flames of which at once broke-out from every side of his dominions. Here the Rajah was frightened and confounded like the elephants, when they seem in danger of being burnt by the fire, in the very same wood, that had hitherto like home sheltered them from every evil and persecution, or like the islanders, who fancy themselves above the reach of all effimies from the secure position of their residence. Instead of rising boldly to make ahead in warlike campaign, he rather thought of finding safety by flight. The Rani knowing well, that to be dis-spirited in times of danger is the sole cause of man's fall, came close to the Rajah to advise him to have patience, but at the same time to show energy and fortitude.

* 'Be' according to our vernacular etymology signifies without, mala means dirt, the whole signifies without dirt (e.i.) spotless.

What must have made thee so timid ? Moharaj ! Said she. It is the allotted portion of man in general to enjoy and suffer alternately the happiness of the hey-day of prosperity and the misery of sense paralysing adversity. Without the troubles attending the adversity, who could have felt himself happy, by relishing the cup of prosperity ? As a boat is to man in time of crossing a river, so is courage in times of peril to get rid of its threatened consequences, so whatever comes out of his ever merciful hand, is all for our good, though we are incapable of appreciating its intrinsic value. To confirm the wise admonition of the Rani I shall cite an example from one of the illustrious poets of England. It runs thus.

“ Respecting man whatever wrong we call,
May, must be right as relative to all.”

A man of a dastardly spirit only betrays want of courage in times of peril, whilst the man of sense by the dint of perseverance and not by the satanic, but satan paralysing intrigue get the better of all the drawbacks of life, howsoever appalling may they appear in first sight. The timid people and they only get disconcerted in times of danger. But on the other hand, the heroes or persons of truly noble blood, take that as a point of glory and boldly face the danger. The jackals or the cunning foxes run with fear into the deep retreat of the wild jungle on hearing the tremendous roarings of the elephants, but the lions rather come out of their secluded retreat to engage themselves in war with delight. The Rani further observed, that kings and rulers are ever held in contempt here on earth and are regarded as sinful beings hereafter should they discover a disposition to avoid war through fear of life, or be runnagates for personal safety. If the heroes boldly confront the field and be vanquished, even there the command the respect of all on earth and will have their seats in the world to come, with those, who are honored and respected as virtuous. Therefore O most venerable and excellent sovereign ! Don't shun the war for the dear-bought safety of life. All these counsels of encouragement stirred up the dormant spirit of the Rajah at once who being thus emboldened began to make preparations for war. By royal order, the arsenals and the war implements were made clean

and sharpened and the fort was filled up with armies of all classes(*c.i.*) infantry, horse, artillery and others, besides, it was stored up with amunitions and beasts of burden, such as elephants, horses and mules, with war chariots, carriages and carts and all other necessaries on the occasion. Rajah Romonimohun to show his wisdom on all occasions, according to the requirements of the time and the peculiar aspect of circumstances and the nature of events prudently put the chosen band of his soldiers, in defence of the fort before he marched into the expedition. The faithful Rani followed her lord with a view to encourage him with her better counsel in times of confusion and disorder. The Rajah pitched his tents in a very commanding situation in front of the enemy's forces. But his majesty solely through the prudent counsel of his wise spouse having ranged his armies in a circular row, erected a very strong and impregnable fort. The flames of war at once blazed forth with such unexampled fury that it was not easy to determine, which party would be victorious and which vanquished. Both the parties fought with uncommon valour, stratagems of war, bravery, and resoluteness. The battle rose so high, that the field itself was resounded with the terrific noise of the battle-drums and the rattling sound of the heavy and unwieldy war chariots then in use and the neighing of the horses and &c. Precisely by this time a swift arrow having unexpectedly come from the opposite party pierced the brow of the Rajah, which had thrown him head-long from the war chariot with as much violence, as a tree of the highest magnitude falls being up-rooted by the terrific force of the cycloic storm, or like elephant whose head is ruthlessly torn by the lion's claws.* The drivers instantaneously returned to the camp with the Rajah, who was then in faint, not so much with the loss of blood as with fear.

* This simile can scarcely be applied to a king, who by the very intelligence of the war, was on a look out for safety by flight, by deserting his own hereditary kingdoms and every thing else, he who was excited to take up arms by female advice, would no doubt be a coward. How could then with justice his fall be compared with the heroes of antiquated times. But of course from what we are come to learn of him from the perusal of his life and account, we could easily be prevailed upon to speak high of him, as a prince of

The radical defect of the Indian soldiers is that in case of their chief's death or his receiving a mortal wound, his troops, though superior in number and though there may be many valiant men to head them are sure to take up to their heels with broken heart and confusion. The like confusion prevailed throughout the ranks of the troops of Itajah Romonimohun. The Ranee by her uncommon powers of fortitude was able to march at the head of the rallied troops, without giving the late sad reverses of fortune to plunge her to and fro into the sea of sorrow. Her Majesty's angry, but melancholy look made every one think, that Bhogobutty* herself under a different transformation, was on her wing to destroy the giant races. The worthy Ranee in way of encouraging her men declared thus! I have lost my husband indeed, but I have not lost my sons, I have hundreds and hundreds of children alive as yet.† None of them are of a mixed blood, but all are equally bold in the field, wise and deliberate in council, fertile in forming projects to thwart the views of the opponents and capable of conducting plots, that may elude the grasp of detection by the foes. Ah! Is it at all probable, that I being the mother of a number of heroes would fall into the hands of the implacable enemies? Could my sons suffer themselves to be always in circumstances

a model character. He might be compared with Numa Pompilius and other pious princes of antiquity without contradictions in respect of the pacific turn of his mind but to put him in the category of the heroes of any country would be to act the part of a mean sycophant, which raises laughter no less in him, whom we flatter, than others.

* Bhogobutty is the most beautiful and at the same time the most powerful of the Hindoo goddesses. She assumed different forms at different times to serve the end of different purposes. She was formerly worshipped in the month of Choit, but Ram Chandra to hasten the death of Raban, the monarch of Ceylon together with the total demolition of his empire worshipped her in the month of Aushir, but in every third year her worship takes place in the month of Kartir.

As for other legendary accounts of this goddess we should stop here.

† This is neither, improbable, nor the foolery of exaggeration, nor even a matter of wonder, that one should be the mother of so many children, at a period, when man lived thousand years at a minimum calculation. The Bible authority supports this assertion.

of being tortured with the sharp and never ending painful chain which binds the dependants? Is the far-famed city named Bejy-nuggur doomed now to fall after a slight struggle and lose its independency! There was a time, when Indra* himself was afraid to conquer it. Is this far-famed city now to be plundered and sacked! Am I being the mother of a number of heroes and having the leonine awe destined to pass the remainder of my life as the mistress of a cunning fox? The Rancee to fire up the sprit of her soldiers, addressed them thus! The celebrated Ram the son of Dasarath,† was alone able to deliver Sita his wife out of the hands of Raban,‡ the mighty king of Ceylon. The unconquerable Dhananjoy§ without the least assistance of one even was successfully able to snatch away Droupadi|| from the lustful grasp of a countless number of princes and Parushram¶ to revenge the

* Indra was according to the authority of the Hindoo mythology, the chief of the countless number of celestial beings. The only object of his mission on earth was to deliver humanity from the tyranny of the Doityas and other giant races. His original name was Amar Rajah (e. i.) the king of the Amar or immortal beings.

† This Dasarath was so much a factotum to his second or to the wife of his age as to banish Ram his eldest son merely to gratify her whim. In spite of her most ungenerous behaviour and in spite of uxorious Dasarath's idiosyncrasy of judgment Ram was never seen, or heard even to heave a sigh in way of murmuring. What better proofs of true magnanimity, patience under such harsh treatment and spirit of forgiveness could a Christian find in Mesiah? Christ has said it merely as a motto to turn our right cheek, when we get a slap on our left but Ram Chandra practically set the precedent

‡ He was also called Dasanan from his ten heads. He had the misfortune to carry away Sita, the wife of Ram which gave rise to a war, that ultimately ended with the demolition of his long celebrated empire. This was of course to fulfill the prophecy of the Hindoo Shashtra.

§ Dhananjoy's mother was Koontec, who by the consent of her husband Pandoo, held amorous intercourse with Indra and became pregnant and in due time delivered Dhananjoy. In golden days, it was not held criminal.

|| Droupadi was the wife of Dhananjoy. She used to bless the bed of the other four brothers of her husband alternately, according to the custom of the days of yore.

¶ Parushram was the son of a Muni, a brief-account of his career and exploits is already given above.

wrongs offered to his father by the warlike Khettry races was capable of defeating them twenty times and can't you all unitedly each of whom no less than any of those heroes save your mother-like native land ? The open and inveterate foes of your father are yet alive, without being revenged. The soldiers being thus encouraged with the bold and manly admonition of the queen-dowager, entered without any fear, but with the impetuosity of the fury of the wind into the heart of the enemy's ranks, which were ranged in a triangular form. The opposite party being now-unable to withstand the desperate forces of the Rancee fled in all directions with confusion. The victorious party persued the vanquished with the rage of a lion, when he pursues the deer. Now the very sight of the victorious flag excited all to trumpet the drum for public announcement. The soldiers and the generals, taking little rest after the toils of the field entered the camp with a countenance expressive of the modest use of success. After this, they began to bewail the loss of their late king. The queen-dowager holding the corpse of her late deceased lord in her lap began to mourn over the consequence of the late sad event. The incessant gust of tears flowed so copiously, that it bathed the whole body of the late king.

Thus after a short while, the queen to give vent to her grief, spoke thus, O dear ! Where have you gone putting me alone in such a miserable condition ? Without your sweet voice, the world seems to me a mere dark dungeon, on whatever side I cast my eyes. The sorrow, that like fire is continually burning within me, is become more sorrowful, as the fire itself is extinguishable, with whatever force may it blaze forth, whilst the fire, that rises out of sorrow to burn the human breast is beyond our power to put out though we may not add fuel to it. Get up once. Hold talk with me for a time and embrace me once more in your affectionate arms and thereby cheer my fallen heart. Whilst the Rani was addressing her lord in languages of sorrow, she being insensible, through the influence of her late misfortune began to roll on the bare ground with the corpse in her arms. Being in sense at intervals, she said thus again and again. Ah ! My lord on earth. God almighty had entrusted you with the responsibility and safety of the millions and millions of people. At a time, when

you were preparing to leave your men entirely at the mercy of your enemies for your individual safety. I to prevent you from standing as a culprit in the sight of god by virtue of your high responsibility advised you to take the field and thereby made myself the author of your premature death. The thought of which like waves is dashing me on the brink of the sea of sorrow. you are become a gainer in falling a victim before the altar of Mars, but I made myself a sport of all the evil thoughts on the subject by escaping the danger of the field and surviving my earthly lord. Whilst all such agitating thoughts were working in her mind, she issued an order to prepare a pile in order to be burnt alive with her lord.* The people immediately gathered together Sandal† wood for a pile. When the faithful Rani was found resolutely bent to be burnt alive with her husband, the generalissimo to stop her, accosted thus. Madam ! The father of the empire has left us and have you intended to forsake us also. Who would then support us as the head of the state, and whom could we run for help and apply for the redress of our grievances ? For whom have we then gained the hard earned victory at the sacrifice of lots of lives. We shall necessarily be compelled after all to become the slaves of others, if you die in this way. We shall feel difficulty in its most aggravated form to bear the yokes of foreigners and strangers, as we are never accustomed to it and as the notion of freedom shall ever be fresh in our memory. If you shut your ears against our prayers, we are sure to be burnt alive here on this pile and in that case, you shall have as a moral and responsible agent to stand in the character of a wretched delinquent before the high tribunal of the 'God of Heaven and earth. The Rani not being melt even here, the general in Chief continued to observe again and again to dissuade her from her

* It was a custom from time immemorial here in India to burn alive, on the same pile with husband. It was not considered as an act of suicide, but the doer held in respect for such an act of clap-trap piety. It was called the suti rite, as none but suti or chaste women, without compulsion ever ventured to burn alive with her husband. Lord William Bentinck abolished this inhuman act, but it was not taken in the light of religious interference.

† To Burn a dead body till it becomes ashes with sandal wood was also considered as an act of piety by the Hindoos.

whimsical and self satisfying scheme, One may follow her husband in the grave without any chance of seeing each others face? Since man is destined to enjoy and suffer according to his own merits and demerits of previous life.* Besides, to accompany the husband on the pile is not the only criterion of fidelity. There are other means as well to show our affection, obedience, constancy and faithfulness. It rather subjects woman to the crime of suicide. There are hundred other ways whereby one can show in the clearest light her really unaffected affection and constancy to her husband and discharge her duty as a truly faithful and loving wife. The discharge of her tender duty without any show of affectedness is a sufficient proof of her fidelity. To act according to the dictates of conscience and religious doctrine is unquestionably far more commanding, than to sacrifice once's life ruthlessly and blindly. All such lectures in argumentative way prevailed upon the queen to alter her self-satisfying plan. After the funeral ceremony of the Rajah being over, a piece of marble stone was raised on the very spot, where His majesty fell, with the inscription of victory. After her return to the palace, she entrusted the prime minister with the whole weight of the Government. Though the whole burden of the reins of Government thus fell into the hands of the minister, the queen dowager was not entirely isolated from its concerns and cares. She used to see with her own vigilant eyes everything right in its way, This is no doubt owing to the salutary effects of liberal education, sharp intellect and deliberate judgement on all and every occasion. A woman of no education can never be expected to distinguish herself in this way and to show superior skill in the administration of a government after the discharge of all the daily functions of royalty. She having formed the true image of her husband in her mind used to offer him divine adoration with a true spirit of veneration and devotion, which in their turn had to answer the purposes of both the flowers and fragrance so much in use among the Hindoos by the time they worship and perform their religious duties in a prayerful way.† She was so entirely given up

* The Hindus believe the Pythagorean doctrine of the transmigration of souls.

† The best of the Hindoo women of all classes worship the husband's feet

to her husband, that she used to pray thus in a fit of prayerful delirium as to the deity. " Lord* when or after the lapse of what period would you vouchsafe to favor me with your company !† The torture of living alone on earth without the enjoyment of the conjugal pleasures is a state of life so tormenting, that no longer could I bear it." After a heart-felt prayer according to the precepts of the Hindoo religion, she was habituated to say this every now and then. " O almighty, omnipresent and omniscient being ! Thou knowest the movements of the utmost recesses of our heart, still I pray thee to grant me the favour of my husband's company after my death." A woman of such remarkable fidelity and strictly monogamistic principle can by no means condescend to give her hand to another, although Porasur† sanctions the custom of remarriage and one of the master-poets of England echoes the same opinion and says thus as follows.

" Better to wed, than to burn."

The power to retain the immaculate purity of conduct in a state of widowhood, though that subjects the sexes to the torments of continual passion, is indeed preferable to the happiness of

just in the same way, as they worship their god and goddesses. They never take their meals before their husbands and gladly take the relics of their husbands, as a mark of reverence for them.

* The above means, that the queen dowager delighted so much in the discharge of the conjugal duties, that to retain the memory of her husband always fresh she used to deify him after his demise. This custom is very common here in India for a chaste wife to regard her husband in the light of the deity.

† The Hindoos besides their notion of the transmigration of souls, believe this as well, that no sooner they leave this tenement of flesh, than they according to their merits and demerits go up to the higher or lower platforms of heaven to join their husbands, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters and cousins of all degrees, friends and acquaintances, relatives and neighbours and etcetra.

‡ This Porasur was the greatest authority of our learned and enlightened Pandit Vidyasagar who quoted very many examples to supercede the arguments of the late clever president of the Hindoo orthodox association about the incongruity and obliquity of judgement of giving a widow in marriage with a member of a different family, after the death of her first husband.

remarriage both in temporal as well as spiritual points of view. Such a modest woman must have the respect not only of man but even some superior order of beings. His Excellency the late Rajah Romoni Mohun had fostered and tendered the young of an elephant from its tender age. He was so very fond of the beast that he used to feed and wash the animal himself. Sometimes he used to roll his hand all over the body of the young elephant solely for its ease and comfort. Love is reciprocal and is sure to show every token of love in return, as is said by Dr. Young

“ Love and Love alone is the loan for love.”

Love with obligation makes a *bona-fide* stranger our own, but malice and antipathy and a disposition to injure render our brothers and sisters worse than strangers in *to-to*. Even the birds and the beasts become familiar to man through the paramount force of love and affection. The Rajah treated the elephant with paternal care and the animal in return showed filial respect and veneration. The elephant was so fond of his master's company that he followed him like shadow. When this elephant grew in age, he used to stand punctually in front of the bath-room of his gracious master holding his throne embroidered with jewels and pearls upon his long projecting trunk. After the fall of the Rajah in the battle, the elephant had run with the swiftness of motion, that characterises the fawns and the deer kinds, when pursued by the fowlers and huntsmen in general*. The driver exerted his utmost to stop him, but with no success whatever, he at once had run pell-mell into the thick jungle. On his way, he saw Bijaya Chandra behind a tree. The animal out of hurry and whirl of mind on account of the sudden death of his father-like lord, took the boy to be his master alive as yet, so having placed him on his head by the help of his trunk ran straight way towards the city. The people who were then working at home followed the elephant with this belief that

* The sport of hunting is confined here in Bengal to a certain tribe called the *Bathay*, the lowest of the rif-raff-class in Bengal, even the commonalty take it something beneath their dignity. But in Europe, the gentries and the nobilities and even the royalty gladly engage themselves in sport like this.

Indra* himself is pleased to come upon the back of the elephant. The city women hearing this came to the public thoroughfare with great precipitancy in the same posture and attitude, lest they fail to enjoy the pleasure of such an uncommon wonder. At a time, When the prime minister was hearing the prayers of the subjects and the queen was listening all from behind the screen, the faithful elephant having to the surprise of all arrived there and placed Bijaya Chandra on the throne, (who being a right object in the right place looked as beautiful as the full moon in the cloudless-summer sky) went away directly to the state stable to mingle with all other elephants there. Those who were then present in the court were as much struck with this sight as aquatic animals suddenly start up by the ruffling noise and movements of the water. The prime-minister instantly began to fan Bijaya Chandra, who through the fear of any mishap lost then his consciousness. The menials began to pour forth water on his head and eyes. The state physicians applied healing balm for the instantaneous revival of his senses with the greatest diligence and care. Through the sovereign virtue of the efficacious remedy Bijaya without delay recovered his sense. Questions being put to after the revival of his sense a little, as to who, how and why has he been thus made the sport of fortune or fate? Bijaya having related all the incidents of the circumstances that had brought him there burst out into tears for his brother Basanta Coomar from whom he was separated a little before he was carried there by the elephant. Bijaya was then almost in a state of madness by reason of his having been given up to sense paralysing grief, besides was so weak, that the labor of the movement of a single pace occasioned swoon. Consequently he was unable to undergo the labor to enquire himself after his dear brother. In defiance of all these, the memory of his brother was so fresh and strong in him, that he could not forget him even for a minute's interval. The chief of the state immediately sent multitudes of people some on horse back and others afoot to look after

* Indra was the chief deity of the Hindoos, none can taste the pleasures of the above phraseology and several others here in this book, unless the readers have a fair knowledge of the idiom of our vernacular and more specially of the Mythological account of the countless numbers of the Hindoo deities.

Basanta Cqomar and they all took the route agreeably to the direction of Bijaya Chandra. None being able to find Basanta who was then taken away by the muni named Suradwaj were of course compelled to be back without being able to fulfill the important object of their mission. After their return, they gave every account of their tiresome journey to the head of the state in a melancholy turn of mind. Bijaya Chandra thence concluding the sure death of his brother, began to give vent of expressions and phraseologies indicative of heart-felt grief and sorrow, sobs and sighs. The Rani together with her yoke-maids and others in the seraglio hearing the sad catastrophe, began to shed tears copiously. It was a matter of such regret, that the adjacent trees and plants and the other inanimate objects seem to have assumed a mournful appearance, so as to show, that they are no less affected on the occasion than man. The chief of the state, was always engaged in the kind offices of Bijaya Chandra. The most learned of the pundits were always present to comfort him and divert his mind by their philosophical and theological lectures from the present cares and worries, which like worm canker the vital part of man and thereby hasten their end. Bijaya Chandra made himself more endeared with the increase of his familiarity with those learned lecturers of the Raj Durbour, by the dint of his uncommon powers of eloquence and the almost incredible attainments of knowledge, so they began to treat him with greater respect, than ere while, as a prodigy of genius. As the lamp gets gradually extinguished by the light of the day with the impulse of wind and air, so was the lamp of anxiety began to fade away by the increase of time. "Time is the destroyer of every thing and throws away the illusions of nature." Bijaya Chandra now forgetting his brother a little, chose the flower-gardens and the other promenade of free ventilation to prevent the failure of his health. The princess named Bimala having seen him from the Zeunanah and having been enamoured with the spotless beauty of the physical system of Bijaya and the charms of his mental constitution, without any stain of affectedness was exceedingly desirous to marry him, but out of bashful habit common to the woman-kind in general, she was hitherto incapable of venturing out her secrets. The wise Rani of a singularly penetrating

understanding was able to catch easily, the inward workings of her daughter by the outward gestures and movements of her body. She had a mind also to marry her daughter with Bijaya from the very day she saw him ; but she prudently deferred the matter with a view to have patience or time to know how far the young couple are taken up with each other's accomplishments of mind as well as of body for without mutual likings and attachment the happiest result of marriage can very seldom be expected. The friends, relatives and neighbours were all now invited to be unitedly assembled to solemnise the ceremony. The invited parties were all present on the appointed day. The maids showed no lack of skill to embellish the girl with the garlands of flowers and other things which heightened the spotless beauty of the bride-groom so highly, that it benumbed the sense of the bride like the talismanic powers of the Arabian night. After the arrival of the bride and the bride-groom on the appointed place, at the appointed hour of the day, the priests of both the parties repeated the respective duties of both the bride and the bridegroom. The Rani yielded up her daughter to Bijaya Chandra to be his wife, after the religious bindings of both the males and the females. Those that were then present there declared with oneness of mind, that God makes jewels attract other jewels.* The ceremony being thus over, the bride and the bride-groom entered the *basur room*.† The night was thus spent in unusual mirth and merriment. The women had used their license so innocently, that Bijaya Chandra was perfectly pleased. Thus seemed the happy night to have passed much earlier than usually. In this manner, the marriage and the attendant ceremonies being over, the queen with

* The above metaphor runs thus in English, that by the harmony of the terrestrial arrangement, we ever see the right move in the right direction, or as the proverb is "Birds of the same feather must unite together."

† The *Basur room* is a certain room in the house of every respectable native, where the bride and the bridegroom pass the whole night they are married with Platonic love with the females of the relatives and neighbours, who join irrespective of caste distinction, but after the dawn of day, they run away and never come before the bride again, but in case of absolute need, they cause the veil to hang over their face, before they appear in sight but even now they don't speak, but whatever they are to do, they do by guess and gestures like the dumb men. or like the trained domestics, as dogs and monkeys and so on.

the full consent of all the people made Bijaya the reigning sovereign. After his coronation, he managed the political diplomacy with unremitted assiduity and care. In his reign, the flames of war were at once put out, which enabled him to devote his time solely to the good and happiness of his subjects. Throughout his dominions, where the people suffered for want of water, he dug there ponds and made reservoirs. He made the roads free from the fear of the highway robbers. The educational, medical and religious institutions and charitable fund establishments were erected by his order, besides arts were introduced from his time into the criminal jails. He used to visit the jails personally in order to inculcate in the minds of the prisoners the principles of the tenets of true religion. The fair and spotless Bimala, the reigning queen gladly participated in the rational labor of her lord. As the tradition is current to the effect, that by the touch of the sparsamani* the iron gets metamorphosed into gold, so precisely in the same way, the wicked and the vicious were prevailed upon to give up their deep rooted sinful habit at once by the religious lectures of the reigning sovereigns. By virtue of their united labor, the number of the prisoners began to fall day by day, and the prison room gradually became empty. The joint labor of both the king and the queen solely for the temporal, as well as the spiritual welfare of their people induced them to offer divine adoration to both the sovereigns. Thus Bijaya being always in company with his learned-wife was able to pass his time pleasantly, sometimes in gossip respecting the manners of mankind of different countries, sometimes indulged in conversation on the utility of the science of geography, and sometimes discussed on the importance of astrological science and sometimes on the usefulness of the science of geometry and at others of the comparative merits and demerits of the lessons on things and last of all used to sing hallelujahs unto him, who sitteth upon the throne of the universe. The chief object of the talks of various kinds, on different subjects of abstruse science is to show, that none, but the educated can know the vanity of enjoyment that arises from the gratification of lower appetites compared with the durable

* Is a precious stone, which has the power to transform iron into gold.

happiness springs from those mentioned above. One day when Bijaya was observing the beauty of the natural scenery, Bimala the queen being very near to him gave out the following in a sweet and melodious tone. Ah Dear ! I am very curious to see the natural beauty of the beasts of the forests and the fowls of the weather.

If you condescend to accede to my prayers, I may then most likely accomplish my long cherished design by staying a few days with you there in the pleasant haunt of my father, named Chittatose* Bijaya readily complied with the humble requests of his dear and obedient wife. At the dawn of the next day, he together with his dear, in company of a few selected companions set out for the desired end. When Bijaya Chandra was driving his chariot, through a country named Bltheah the inhabitants of the jungle including the birds and the beasts seemed to have come out of natural impression to worship him as a superior order of being. Here Bimala, the queen pointed her fingers towards him and spoke thus in a jocular epigrammatic sort of countenance. See ! My dear See ! The flower trees knowing your arrival are come to pay you the tribute of honor with the scent of their new bud flowers. The peacocks and the peahens are dancing with their expanded plumes and thereby giving mute proofs of their reverence for your Majesty. The stags with their sharp and active look seem to have gazing to offer something in the shape of present, so I pray your Majesty for them all to condescend to accept and comfort them. Bijaya Chandra answered with a smile ! None of them are (as you said just now) faithful and loyal, but all are rogues and scoundrels. As for the validity of my guess see for instance, the pomegranate has taken away the sweets of your rising breath, the she fawn has deprived you of the gracefulness of the eyes of the woman kind, the pea-hen† has robbed your sex the beauty of your dress and the elephant the handsome gait of your motion and thereby disappointed me the pleasures of so many enjoyments unitedly. without their

* The etymological meaning of the term, according to our vernacular idiom is heart cheering, the first part of the word Chitta means heart and the last tone signifies to cheer.

† The above is purely according to the judgements of the natives of course. They ascribe the virtues of this and that such and such and so on.

unnecessary interference I could have relished alone the sweets of hundred kinds of enjoyments without envy or even competition. Bimala in her turn answered also in smiling countenance. That's the reason; my dear. I often and always apply the term "Dear exclusively to you only. With all these reciprocal exchange of conjugal love, and jokes, they entered the pleasure haunt. Thus was Bijaya Chandra able to pass his time happily, by observing daily the fresher and fresher kinds of delight. But in the midst of all these enjoyments, one day at noon, all on a sudden, his mind being disordered, he felt himself quite uneasy. When his associates were thus trying to get the clue of such an unexpected change, sleep imperceptibly stole upon his eyes and he felt a sort of unconsciousness for the time being. Here his spouse-consort seeing the apparently meaningless event forthwith placed him in her arms and did every office, as becomes a loving and chaste wife in sanguine hopes of his quick recovery. By degrees, the night approached. The diurnal beings all slept, but the nocturnal with loud and tremendous noise came out of their dens and caves to prowl and roam for food. The whole earth was resounded with the shrill noise of the worms and the firmament was fraught with a countless number of stars, that seemed to have been arranged in as regular a manner, as flowers in a garland. Gradually the darkness made way for day-light. In the dead stillness of the night, Bijaya Chandra dreamt, that Basanta Coomar is suffering much from thirst, so he started up. As every natural object extends through the warmth of heat, so the memory of the past event in like manner melted and diluted the heart of Bijaya Chandra, who forthwith jumped upon the bare ground and turning his face towards the direction, where his brother was left alone, he repeated these pitiable words to give vent of his grief. Ah Basanta! Dear Basanta! On the other hand Bimala, his wife observing the seemingly meaningless occurrence was at first taken by surprise and having got no answer of her questions as to the cause of the matter she at last followed him.

The servants of both the sexes, as well as the animals fell then fast asleep, consequently could not know anything of the sudden oc-

currence. The dear and faithful Bimala was so deeply engaged in the discharge of the kind offices of her husband, that she scarcely even thought of awaking them for help. Bijaya had entered into the depth of the wood. His wife followed him even there like shadow. Man is naturally strong and robust, but the sex delicate, so blood began to flow from her feet from the tiresome journey through a path of stones and pebbles, necessarily being unable to keep pace with her husband, was compelled to be lagged behind. During this interval Bijaya Chandra having taken a circuitous path was separated and disappeared. The good and excellent Bimala, having lost the sight of her husband, called him constantly with a loud, but welcome tone and at the same time tried to walk faster and faster. The pain of the lost husband having in a manner superseded the pain of a long and tiresome journey tears began to gush out copiously from her eyes, the lustre of which resembled the brightness of the deer kind. However she in this way arrived at the face of a three sided road. The night seemed to have departed purposely to show her the right way. By the impulse of the slow and cold wind, the night dews having fallen upon the leaves of the trees insinuated into our minds the idea, that the inanimate objects being moved with compassion for Bimala pouring abundantly copious drops of water from their eyes. The morning gale plainly appeared to have whispered the sylvan inhabitants, that were then slumbering, to awake, arise, support and help the pious Bimala, who having stood on the face of a certain triangular road, began to think of the side her husband took, so she stood there motionless like the female elephant in the absence of her male. In this attitude, she almost in a fit of sudden derangement of the brain, the necessary consequence of the anxieties of mind occasioned from a sad combination of several adverse circumstances, specially the separation of her husband at such an awful crisis, accosted thus in a fresh paroxysm of madness. O sylvan gods and goddesses, beasts and trees and the inanimate objects and the supernatural agents condescend to point me out of favor the path my husband took. Her husband having trodden the grassy path made a visible mark of his foot print. Notwithstanding which Bimala being disconcerted with the continual reverse of for-

tune cast her eyes upon the foot print of her husband but not being able to judge aright she took the contrary way, so she had no more chance of finding her husband. At last the noon arrived, when being overtaken with fear and sorrow, she thought of offering her prayer, as the last and the only source of consolations under all such heavy misfortune in a devotional tenor of mind. O Lord ! almighty ! Thou art present on sea and land and air. Thou fillest up all spaces but we out of frailty could'nt see thee any where. Thine merciful hand is upon the head of my husband even here in this terrible, lone and solitary retreat and saving me from all harm, both conceivable, as well as inconceivable still I pray thee, O Lord ! to distance all danger from my husband and let no stain come upon the page of my chastity. Thus on she went forward with prayer. At length, seeing a temple richly adorned with jewels entered there with hopes of finding human face, but was sadly disappointed there as well. She now sat and offered her prayer again and again with more and more enthusiastic feeling ! On the other hand, those who went on with them to the pleasure haunt of Bimala's father, not seeing any of them the next morning were quite astonished. However after a little reflection on the subject, some went to the city and others tried to make every possible enquiry as to the nature of such an wonderful elopement. Dear readers I call your particular attention here, as I shall begin again the story of Basanta Coomar.

CHAPTER V.

One day, when Saradwaja Muni sitting on a costly cushion, was expatiating on the sovereign virtue of the law of chastity, before the females of the neighbouring saintly Brahmins Kumar and the other children of the adjacent Munis and Rishis in order to gladden their hearts with the instructive, as well as entertaining precepts of the wise lecturer, which flowed like honey from his lips, sat around him like Brihaspati† around the constellations of the seven moons. Unexpectedly there came the young of a deer that made reiterated attempts to snatch the ivy from the trunk of a large mango tree around which, it was laid so close and fast, that the deer could not succeed in its efforts to get it away from the body of the mango tree. Having observed this, Brahmata Kumar spoke thus to his yoke-fellows. Look sharp there! My dear friends. By the cogeny of our Rev. Guru's precepts, even the ivy is come to set value on the usefulness of the virtue of chastity. The ivy evidently seems to have hung round the large tree against the renewed efforts of the young deer in the manner a chaste woman does against the temptations of a man of dissolutive character. The more a woman tries with fresher and fresher allurements the more she gives of greater proofs of her fidelity and unyielded integrity. Every new attempt on the part of the besiegers gives new strength to the besieged for resistance. The Muni hearing this, ordered Brahmata in a smiling countenance to keep the deer at some distance otherwise it would tease

† Kumar and Rishi are religious saints. They always live in the forest and are always engaged to pass their time in prayer and meditation.

† Brihaspati is one of the nine primary planets

the ivy* again. There came an ambassador from Anandamaya the king of the city named Anandanagar to the Muni, the dust of whose feet he took first in tokens of respect and then delivered a letter just at the time Basanta was going to tie up the deer at a little distance. He read it instantly with attention and spoke to Basanta in tones, indicative of heart-felt joy. My dear child, His Excellency, the Moharajah invited my attention for consultation on some particular affairs. I am bound by his obliging manners consequently I shall have to set out with as much haste as a father does when he hears of any misfortune, that has befallen his son. I shall have to start by the dawn of the next morning. The capital city named Anandanagar was the ornamental town throughout the empire of the king Ananda Maya. If you like to see this wonderful city, you may bear me a company. Having said this, the Muni after his evening prayer, proceeded to the river side. A little after the ever resting hour, the night approached in the same way, as calm after a storm. Basanta was indeed born a prince, but being bred up from his very infancy in the house of a Muni was necessarily an alien to the manners and customs of society. Now having gone to his bed, he fell fast asleep with many thoughts, in respect of the mode of the city-people, their scope, principles and the plan of Moharajah's life. At the dawn of the day, Basanta, with curiosity, common to the travellers, came to the Muni for permission before he went away with joy to see the city. Precisely at the time of his starting for the city, his eye-brows were alternately risen and fallen in the manner of dancing. Having observed this favorable omen of marriage, he thought within himself, that it looks impossible indeed, that an ivy in a garden should surround a large tree situated in a dwelling house, but nothing is impossible from the fiat of the Almighty. He can make impossibility pass as possibility, without appearing in the least as impossible. Having reached the metropolis, he cast a fixed gaze on both sides of the public thoroughfare. The magnificent houses of the rich capitalists and other wealthy gentlemen

* Ivy is mentioned in the story about this chapter as a first symbol of a woman, the woman is the husband and the deer, the first time that the deer seduce they

and nobility, sacred, useful, and beautiful, for the benefit of the
 generation, and the world, to be compared to any other city of the previ-
 ous times, such as the, Anandamaya, Anand, Anand, Anand, Anand, Anand,
 hospitals, charity fund, erections of fort and ramparts and religious
 institutions for the performance of the sacred duties actually
 make the city stand in the light of an ornament to the whole
 world. There the women are remarkably modest and bashful,
 chaste, and dutiful. There the water and the air are both conge-
 nial to health. There the lands are exceedingly fertile and yield
 both flowers, as well as fruits of very many kinds. Basanta
 Kumar observing the uncommon blessings the people enjoy there
 in all and every respect made this reflection, that the city is all
 along known by the proud name of Anandanagar. Such a high
 sounded name is justly applied and it justly deserves. Cities
 of acknowledged superiority and beauty like it are beyond all
 controversy very rare indeed. Saradwaj Muni after having
 arrived at the court of Anandamaya and having seen the palm
 of his right arm poured blessings upon Narada Neth, the
 reigning potentate just in similar way Basista Muni did to
 Ram Chander when he had become an incarnate on earth. The
 Rajah in his turn, having turned around the Muni agreed to
 to the custom of the east offered him a cushion to sit with joy
 and delight, no less than what a man of retired habits, when he
 unexpectedly sees a long absent friend. The Reverend Muni
 sat on the same cushion with Basanta. The Rajah first of all
 asked about the health of all the brother Muni. The Muni after a
 slight reply put the same question to the Rajah and got the satis-
 factory answer in return. Then the Rajah having seen Basanta in
 company to sit on the same cushion with the Muni took him to
 his most favourite disciple, and the son of a most venerable

According to our vernacular etymology the term Anand, signifies joy
 and happiness, and the city where joy and happiness dwell. Spring always reigns
 in the growth of the vegetation for want of change, of the
 monsoon wind blows with a refreshing air, and the sun
 shines with a clear and bright light, and the earth is covered
 with a variety of green plants and flowers.

saint, so he didn't put him any question at all. However the healthy and robust make of the boy's constitutional frame his longmanous arms, his wide and well-defined fore-head, his large and somewhat red spotted eyes, his undaunted courage and commanding look, his simple and unaffected manners, attended with gravity, his uncommon powers of eloquence and accurate pronunciation made the Rajah conclude, that he must have descended from Khetry* race. Whilst he was labouring under a vain delusion, he saw the boy capapie. As the experienced navigator could know the approach of rain, thunder and lightning from the natural aspect of the firmament, so was the Muni able to discover the inward workings of our Rajah from his constant steady gaze upon Basanta Kumar. The Muni had no mind to give a genealogical account of the boy. To prevent the Rajah from asking all these inquisitive questions, he first questioned him about the cause of such a sudden call, so as to divert his attention. The Rajah answered, Reverend Sire! My daughter is arrived at marriageable state of life. It was my long cherished design to yield her up to a fit person, but the chief minister finding fault with me there in that respect discouraged me in a manner. Consequently whether the girl should have her own independent judgment to follow, or should depend upon the choice of the parent is a matter of question not as yet clearly determined. You are therefore called upon and whatever opinion you will be pleased to pass is to be considered the decisively best. The Muni said, that whatever objection the prime-minister has raised is not altogether inconsistent with the principles of our reasoning faculty. As in most cases the course, the guardians adopt, instead of yielding an iota of that case, they naturally expect, rather becomes a source of continual discontent and sometimes discord also. It has been obviously seen almost always, that the parents and guardians following the path of the shrewed and cunning lawgivers give up their daughters in marriage to persons, whom they thought the fittest, before their daughters come up to the age of maturity and before they get their faculty of judgment fully developed. The guardians expect neither

* The Khetry are the most warlike race in India.

any reward, nor even a thank, if the contract eventually be productive of wholesome consequences on the part of both the bride and bridegroom, but in case, through the combination of some or other adverse circumstances, they can't agree with each other, as befits well on their part, then to what endless misery they suffer is beyond our power to dwell at large. The sufferers themselves are the standing proofs of the matter. It has been written by the religionists, that as long the daughters reach not maturity, so long they are incapable of knowing how to serve their husbands rightly and how far they ought to sacrifice their own ease and comfort for the happiness and well-being of their husbands, the wise parents must defer the marriage. If the girls have arrived the age of puberty, so as to know well the happiness of marriage life and if they be educated, then and there they must hold the same privilege with the boasted Damayanti and Sābitri and other princesses of note in Hindoo mythology and legendary tales in respect of choosing their own husbands and this mode assuredly stands in the ascendancy. This mode is not only better and preferable, but is undecidedly the best and the most advisable one. On the other hand, though you may after a fair trial and careful examination of his descent, tenor of conduct, regularity of manners and &c. yield up your daughter, it may not fail still to be attended with pernicious effects hereafter. It has been found often and often among several respectable families, that to marry their girls according to the choice of their parents is to subject them to innumerable difficulties. For instance, sometimes the husbands don't heartily esteem their wives and sometimes the wives don't like and love their husbands and this begets various kinds of mischiefs that do not only hurt the parties, but sap the very foundation of the society. Therefore the best course and the most reasonable one is, Moharaj to allow them to have their own way. The Rajah said, that whatever you said on the subject-matter is quite reasonable and I must follow it. But I further pray you to stop here till the ceremony is over and the compliance here would highly oblige me. The Muni observed, that such an obliging and conciliatory manner could without difficulty extort compliance even from the most hard hearted and obdurate. After this Rajah

allowed a free quarter to the Muni. Immediately after the departure of the Muni with Basanta thence to the appointed lodging, the Rajah said to the prime-minister to fix an auspicious day and then to send letters of invitation to the continental kings and learned prelates through Bhauts,* and to engage engineers of unquestionable skill and repute, but at the sametime extensive practice to erect at a little distance from the fort splendid halls and rooms to accommodate the outsiders and others. The prime-minister began to make every necessary preparation in accordance to the royal order. The garden appointed for the abode of Saradwaja Muni was adjacent to the Zenuanah on the north side. It was surrounded on all sides with brick walls. There was an entrance on the east of it and in the middle, there was a large tank. There stood a very handsome two storied building in the centre of the tank which bespeaks the wonderful skill of the artist of the highest repute and on account of its delightful and commanding sight, it looks like the mine of all sorts of pleasures. The situation of the building being in the middle of the tank made it at first view look as beautiful as the painted pinnacle in a large glass frame. Or the beauty observable from the reflection of the building beneath the clear water equals the beauty of the cloudless sky fraught with the wreaths of the countless twinkling stars above. The Rajah after visiting the place, that was assigned for the temporary abode of the venerable Saradwaja used sometimes to pass his time in company with the ladies of his seraglio on talks of various kinds concerning the political affairs such as to the advisability or non-advisability of introducing one law and annulling another and at others about the amelioration of the moral nature and the religious sentiments of his subjects, so as to make them happy both for time and eternity. Occasionally the Rev. Muni used to lecture the ladies on the subject of virtue under various heads and different forms, specially on the important results and the

* It is customary in India on the part of the royalty, gentry and nobility to despatch letters of invitation to all the respectable portion of their community through Bhats, who hold very insignificant position in society they move. But by virtue of their profession they get access to all and mingle in every company.

sterling merits of the vow of chastity. This garden was chiefly intended for the purpose of serious consultation on private matters. On the south of this garden, there was a private entrance, through which the *pardah* women used to come for the purpose of beguiling their leisure, in fairs and frolics of every kind, but always of innocent nature of course.

None else were allowed to visit it without the consent and authority of the Rajah. The surface of the land on all sides of the tank being surrounded with red, blue, green, and the variety of all other beautiful colors of flowers and the trees of most excellent fruits having been planted at the expense of the highest skill of the gardeners and the rectified choice of the persons of enviable taste heightened the beauty of the beautiful scene. Basanta being present there with the Revd. Muni was astonished beyond description in observing the beauty of the scenery occasioned by the erection of the building in the centre of the pond and the plantation of the flower and the fruit trees in wonderfully good order. The Rev. Muni commenced a particular detail of every thing done there and thus passed a few days. Once Sucoomari the daughter of the Rajah Anuudomoy whilst sleeping with her two companions, dreamt a strange dream. She started and got up and awakened Chandrima her associate and communicated thus. My dear! Whatever wonderful events were seen in a fit of dream are at once vanished out of my sight, as suddenly as the bubbles on the surface of the water. Chandrima in a similar fit of wonder answered. My dear Sucoomari! what strange dream is that? If it be not of a private nature, or if there be no objection on your part, please condescend to satisfy my curiosity in its relation. Sucoomari answered. My dear! She who hesitates to lay open her heart to her associate is as much incapable of relishing the unspeakable sweets of the pleasures of friendship, as one, who out of vaunt says, that she knows all the attributes of the almighty, without knowing at all what God is! Did I ever hide anything from you? Chandrima said. No far from it. But there is a tradition among the sexes to the effect, that the relation of what happens course of a dream now and then attends with ill consequences on the part of the relator,

that's the reason I dared not request and insist upon you notwithstanding our intimacy. Sukumari added. It is all a foolishness to believe all such hurly-burly of the undomestic woman. Pray pay your best attention and I shall fully relate of every thing what occurred in my dream, without the exclusion of an iota of the fact. Therefore be good enough to hear the story of my late dream. During the interval of sleeping hours I thought myself that I went to the garden in company with you all and you seemed to have sat at the foot of a Madhobilotha* for rest and I went alone to the tank, where I saw a man of superhuman beauty. On a sudden view, he might be taken to be Modan† himself walking in pursuit of a new object for his ever warm embrace. The exquisite beauty of his person specially the gracefulness of his eyes were sufficient inducements to make me go close to him. He also came forward and politely questioned me thus, "Who are you? O beautiful maid! and what must have called you here." Instead of a ready answer I with the bending posture of my head and a look of bashfulness, that characterises the females began to drive away the ground by the pressure of the toe of my left leg. He assumed then a somewhat melancholy look, when he saw me reluctant and not prompt enough to return a verbal reply. But after a pause of some minute's time only, he said again "My dear! Your face is known to me." Hearing this, as I was desirous to ask him something in return, when he was relating without the exception of all the previous occurrences I suddenly awoke. To my amazement, my dear; I couldn't see any more that paragon of beauty, neither could I say, where, how and why is he so abruptly vanished out of my sight. Be you the eye-witness that in his absence drops of waters are like stream flowing from my eyes. What a wonder is that; that my mind involuntarily tends towards him without previous acquaintance. It must be the play of nature. Chandrima spoke now in a little

* Madhobilotha is a creeping plant. It spontaneously grows here every where in the rainy season. It bears red flowers.

† Madan is the God of love. The term is often loosely applied by the natives of course to beauty attended with wit, just as beauties here are called Kritis in way of jokes.

rebuking tone. It is not (as you vainly imagine) the play of nature; but the result of mad thoughts, which you shouldn't indulge at all. Shame to you. Don't you know that dream is ever false and is ever far from being realised? What stain may not possibly blacken your moral conduct if such hurly-burly were to come to the notice of the critical portion of the public? Just cease to think on that subject. Wooma answered. My dear Chandrima! Could you catch the latent and chief view of Sukumari's dream? Chandrima said no. She didn't understand the depth of the dream. Let her learn from you the real meaning of it. Then said Wooma, that Sukumari always thinks of a most beautiful bridegroom, necessarily, the thought of the day becomes the employment of the mind in the night. Sukumari observed again. Dear Wooma. You always think of a new bridegroom in your awakened state in day. Why do you fear then of groundless consequence of blemishes upon your character, when dream itself is false? Dream is not true indeed; but through the combination of some supernatural agency something quite impracticable in nature may become a possible fact. Why should I then like women of no character frequent him!" Shame to me. Had it been compulsory, even there I should'n't have done that, when I hold the privilege of following the independent verdict of my own judgment in respect of marrying any one I like without making myself little in the eyes of the world and falling before religion. Chandrima spoke in her turn. My language is free from all those joints and knots, though you strongly, if not reasonably suspect me there. But mind, we are women have many more imperfections, independently of the frailty common to the nature of mankind. The consequence of our doings often and invariably becomes contrary, therefore it behooves us to judge aright of the anticipated results, ere we undertake a task. See for instance, those women who have not received the blessings of education are easily able to maintain the vow of chastity, more specially, we have acquired knowledge by which we are enabled to judge of the advisability of following the one and the non-advisability of avoiding the other. So if we do wrong, then the education to the sex would altogether be considered as quite useless. It would

then be an impression in many, that more a woman is educated, the more she becomes worse in moral point of view. There are several countries yet, where the people are generally of opinion that to educate the females is to act contrary to the dictates of the reasoning faculty, but this betrays only the want of judgment on their part. The woman, who is resolute enough can easily maintain chastity. Or otherwise, if we let them remain in a state of ignorance, they not only become coquets, but also become the inlets of mischiefs in several other ways. Wooma said. My dear ! 'What are you lecturing about to Sukumari ? It is as impossible to please a blind man with the exercise of dancing, or to please a dumb one with hymns, that can take up even the supreme deity, as it is to lead those in the right way, who are continually on a fresh look-out for opportunity to commit new wrongs in a new form merely to gratify their lustful appetites. Chandima spoke. My dear Sukumari ! Don't give heed to that foolish talk of that infatuated fool. But hear now, what has our Guru* said in way of fables concerning the secret workings and plays in the minds of the educated as well as the uneducated masses of women. The mind of the latter like night in the Zenith of her dark domain is ever wrapped up in utter darkness whilst that of the former like the clear sky is always shining transcendently with the refulgent splendour of the day itself. The one out of impressions arising from stolid ignorance, subjects in each step to innumerable kinds of groundless fears, such as the fear of ghosts and apparitions and &c. Whereas the other laughs and slights all these, as something quite impracticable in nature. The uneducated woman is often a prey to temptations, however distant may they be. Many to serve their wicked designs raise the fear of the ghosts and several other invisible beings in their minds and thereby mislead them, † in case they see them withstand the irresistible

* Guru means spiritual guide. They stand on the same rank here in India, as clergy-men in the continent of Europe. The offices of both are alike.

† "Light minds are ever pleased with trifles"

‡ This must either be a biased, or altogether an erroneous statement of the author. By striking terrors man can seduce a female I don't believe there,

temptations. On the other hand some under pretence of religious lectures prevail upon them to plunge head-long into such vices as shaming humanity. The educated woman is above the sensations of all fear, save and except the fear of the one almighty, Omniscient and Omnipresent God. So those vicious people, who are ever the slaves of lustful tendency can never succeed in their abominable thoughts and deeds, by raising in them the fear, either of death, or punishment. Neither could they allure them to accede to their base desires by the temptations of the worldly possessions, nor by wrong lectures of false religion or wrong interpretations of even the religion of the scriptures. Had Sita, the wife of Ram Abotar* been uneducated could she then have retained her habitual firmness and constancy, or could have defied the death like fear of punishment of Raban† the most implacable foe of her husband? Those who have read the lives and memoirs of Damayanti and Sabitri are come to learn very well how far are the educated portion of the females morally courageous. The uneducated women out of blind affection and want of common sense do not forbid, their children to run pell-moll into such vices which might cause them to die both for time and eternity. So those children out of wrong impression of wrong notions of religion commit very many misdeeds, which set in defiance the moral precepts themselves to eradicate those impressions hereafter. As a piece of cloth is never found to be wholly wiped off of the mark of the ink so in like manner the fault arises out of a desire of maternal imitation cannot at once be removed by the diligent tuition of an assiduous teacher, though he

but the woman do not comply, (as our author asserts) out of ignorance, but out of the frailty of their sex. To support my judgment on this head I would cite Læretia's case, who was not only educated, but an accomplished one in all and every respect.

* Abotar means incarnate.

† This, Raban was the mighty king of an island named Ceylon, in the south of Hindoostan. The scholars of the red tape schools in Bengal hold the opinion, to the effect, that the Europeans could not reach its shore. No sooner do they go near to it, than their vessels sink and they drown themselves. They angrily mutter their jaws when a man ventures to contradict them at that foolish point.

may adopt hundreds and hundreds of methods and though he may apply them in a variety of forms to serve the end.* As the vital air, which is indispensibly essential for the continuance of our lives becomes obnoxious, when it gets contaminated and thereby shortens our lives ; so in similar manner, the mother by reason of her blind affection, through the efficacy of her unfounded zeal, becomes the enemy of her children. The former only injures the constitutional health of man, the latter affects our very immortal souls. The instructions of the educated matrons become the seeds, whence spring up the trees of morality and virtue. The précept of the tutors in after life does the same office to the instructions of the mother in preceeding life, what water does to the trees. Chandrima hearing these argumentations spoke thus to Wooma. My dear ! Cease to say, that the uneducated women abandon themselves in vices and follies, which the educated wisely elude. Every one of those irrespective of any considerations of the educated and the uneducated portion of the females is to sink deeper and deeper into vices, who having come to believe the existence of one true god, keeps no fear of the future state of rewards and punishments. As the sharpened weapon is more to be dreaded by those, against whom it is intended to be raised than the blunted one, so is the vicious among the educated more a tremendous set of beings, than the vicious among the ignorant class. God is not so merciful to the educated sinners, as he is to the uneducated sinners. How far is it true may easily be known to every one, though he may not be a man of deep penetration and rare judgment. Happy is she, who never trod the path of vice, but happier is she and double credit must be her's be she ignorant or educated, who once being tempted to smell the enchanted fragrance of vice, has returned to the holy, but not showy shrine of virtue, as a true worshipper of God. My dear Wooma ! Said Chandrima. I dont gain say the validity of your arguments here in this point, but remember, that the educated set are not so easily allured to vices, as the un-

* The author seems to have been highly prepossessed in behalf of female education, without remembering, that a woman with all her accomplishments, is like a dog, walking by the hinder legs. This is Dr. Johnson's opinion.

educated masses. In fact, as the major portion of the one is more in everything, that is excellent and noble, so is the majority of the other more in every thing, that is mean and debasing. But the reason, that the public find the greater number of the miscreants among the educated, is simply this, that the very smallest mark on a sheet of a white cloth looks more refulgent and bigger than its real size. Let me to confirm my opinion on the point in question illustrate one instance from a very witty poet of England.

"In beauty faults conspicuous grow,

The smallest speck is seen on snow"

The ill opinion of the public is taken as a mark of indelible infamy by men of cultivated understanding, where, as the raw ignorant take that in the light of glory on their part. They are shameless to such a ludicrous extent, that "Shame itself is ashamed to sit upon their brow." Chandima having said to Wooma, addressed to Sukumari. Whatever I spoke on this head, I spoke only of the uneducated females, but now your particular attention is called on to the uneducated males, who out of stolid ignorance and out of the highest regard to the caste distinction seriously object the Zennanah education, which clearly drags into light the mean spirit of their nature. If a young man of liberal views raise a talk on the subject of female education, they are sure to hoot after him and get themselves exasperated to a diabolical extent and each hint, in behalf of the female enlightenment, serves to provoke them as much as a drop of oil kindles and inflames the furnace of fire. To give vent to their passion they pronounce the name of their deities such as Ram and Radhamadhuh* respectively. They also shut their ears against such a proposal with the palm of their hands. Some of them utter some other similar phraseologies with an air of contempt towards the rising generation and of those the following one I repeat is more ridiculous and make them become

* The orthodox Hindoos pronounce the names of those two incarnates, when they hear billingsgate or any indecorous language. They also shut their ears against those abominable expressions, with a view to get rid of a vicious stain on their spotless minds. This is no doubt praiseworthy, (if they do not carry it to a ludicrous extent out of prejudice or ignorance,) as it shows their fear of vice to the highest pitch. Radhamadhuh being one of the countless names of Kristo Abotar.

the laughing stock even of their own begotten children in spite of their highest reverence for their fathers and superiors and in defiance of their enlightened acquisition of knowledge. In the first place, they heave a sigh, which is habitual to the conservatives of Bengal before they speak and before they close together their lips. They pronounce this indistinctly, so as to put their tongues in right order, and what they often say is this, Ah ! What more shall we see in progress of time. This being only the beginning of Kaliyug.* In the second place. They maintain that nothing better is to result from the education of the females, than a laughing change. That the females would frequent the court and all other public places to consult the good of the state whilst the males put on the costumes of the females, in order to be cooped within the narrow bounds of their dwelling houses, to dress the rice, dhal and curries and also to sweep the compounds. All such reasonable opponents of female education are quite ignorant of the effects of education. They are out of unfounded impression led to believe, that the definite object of the acquisition of knowledge is to serve the will of others, so as to be able to maintain themselves and their families. Those who acquire learning without knowing the chief end of it and at the same time have the ambition to pass by the name of the learned, may without blame be styled a sort of four legged bookful block-heads. Knowledge is beyond all price. None can out of malice and rancour rob us the smallest jot of it. A man is invulnerable against the assaults of enemies and can withstand every shock by the dint of education alone. Man is capable of judging what is right and what is wrong by the cogency of his learning, and can seek his own, as well as other's real and durable interest through it. Besides he can comprehend also the nature of divine arrangements and thereby can

* The Kali yug or the dark age is the last of the four epochs, into which the world is divided. According to the religious authority of the Hindoos, there was no sin in the Satay yug or the age of truth, or golden age but it entered on the world with Dwaper yug, or the second epoch and began to grow in strength in the Treta yug and at length became most powerful in Kali yug, or the fourth epoch, or the age of sin. The Hindoos say, that this age would end with the annihilation of the world.

enjoy the physical and mental ease. The heart of such a man glows with gratitude towards the maker of the universe, but the fools being unable to penetrate into the depth of the object of learning often and always follow the contrary views. In the midst of all such rational dialogues, the night past. The sun having appeared in the east, the darkness, that had hitherto overhung the earth began to be dispelled. The crows now rose up, as in a state of hurry and whirl with their natural sound. Basanta Kumar, after having done with his morning prayer began to walk at random in the flower garden. By this time, Sukumari in company with her comrades came to the foot of a large banyan tree to pluck the flowers. Chandima seeing Basanta from a little way off spoke to Sukumari with her fingers towards Basanta. See? My dear; Your dream may most likely be realised. It appeared on their first interview, they loved each other so highly, that each seemed to be the idol of the eyes of the other. But in consequence of their mutual interview within the space of a short interval, their real intention was not fulfilled. Now the real picture of everything, that occurred in her dream, seemed to have obtained the possession of her bosom. Sukumari being unable to have patience longer, began to follow Basanta closer and closer with the sole intent to ask him of his parentage and other particulars. Wooma touching Sukumari with her fingers spoke as follows: Ah? Princess—What must have at once obliterated from your memory your own exemplary and inimitable virtue? Sukumari out of shame blushed her head, but being unable to follow him returned home with thoughts only of that graceful person. The disappearance of Sukumari like the separation of our constant object of love made Basanta melancholy, who spoke thus within himself. Why is it, that a mere sight of this lady subjected me to such painful thoughts, as are the allotted portion of those females, who are destined to suffer the pangs of perpetual widowhood? This must be the offspring of a crazed imagination. Sukumari having called her associates to the dancing hall spoke thus. Dear Chandima! Dream in spite of its ever-deluding nature may occasionally assume the form of reality, but the attendant results are so utterly false and tantalising so often, that I am curi-

ous to learn what they really are. My dear Sukumari, said Wooma. The rising sun dispels darkness, the expansion of the flowers carries away the scent and the fragrance, for that delay is not required. Although this indirect answer silenced Sukumari for a while of course, but the memory of Basanta ever shone afresh in her mind. When, how and where to see the object of her dream became the theme of her night dream and day vision? She was so entirely given up to this thought, that it made her get emaciated. Day by day her health began to decline and she became exceedingly weak. Chudrini having observed the inward movements of Sukumari and perceptible changes in her physical constitution addressed to Wooma. My dear! Our Sukumari is day by day getting emaciated and disfigured with the constant thought of having a husband worthy of her embraces. See for example, she does not mingle with us now as formerly, rather she gets disturbed, if we seek of our own accord her company. Let us try to find the true cause of it. What does she always think of in an almost forgetful and indifferent state of mind? With this intent, they both having proceeded to her, began to see and hear from a little distance what is passing on with her. They saw from behind, that Sukumari with a book in her hand was speaking thus within herself. The nature of the one to ensnare another is the play of the creation, whereas I am the author of my own ill luck.

“We suffer more from folly than fate.”

A little after again, she was heard speak thus to another. You are curiously eager to see the picture of the pious Rajah named NARA of whom you have heard from the swan,* but the beauty of Basanta struck me to such an extent, that I feel myself quite uneasy in his absence although I saw him once only by my own eyes. Whatever difference there might be between you and me regarding our birth. I see every item of the nature of your present case exactly resembles mine. After bewailing for a short while like a mad one, she having brought the picture just close to her again addressed thus. “What are you (Sir) a prince or the son of a prelate.” In case you be the son of a religious saint,

“In days of yore when time was young,
The birds conversed as well as sung.”

"why do you follow contrary principles?" The social beings like iron burn others in way of taking vengeance, when they themselves get burnt with passion which does the same office in them, as fire does to the metals, but the saints never give pain to others, though they may be wronged beyond the powers of forgetfulness and forgiveness as well, rather endeavour to make them happy any how. I shall illustrate one instance of it only, to corroborate my assertion and it runs thus:—

Sindhu Muni, the son of a blind Muni, did not curse Dasaratha,* the king of Oude, though he pierced him with a soundless arrow. The attention of the Christian readers is particularly called forth here. See what god-like spirit of forgiveness the natives have. Some there were and some there are yet in these days of degeneracy, who not only turn their right cheek to a man who gives a slap on their left, but also pat over the palms of the injurers, in case they hurt the joints of their hands in inflicting the blows upon others. What a more beautiful instance of the spirit of forgiveness one could possibly expect in a Christian land? Why do you then put a *bonafide* innocent girl to pain without cause? Is this the result of the lecture of Saradwaja Muni? or the effects of reading many religious books and tracts? or the wholesome consequence of being always in company with the saints and religionists? You seem to be as inhuman, as those who in course of their hunting excursion discharge their arrows without pity in the least against the deer, that under the influence of fear cast their pitiful eyes to and fro. Such a behaviour on your part proves, that you must not be the son of a religious saint, but a prince no doubt. But again, the costume and the beads in your hands go against this supposition of mine. Would you therefore be pleased to relieve me from all these uncertain conclusions by giving an account of your life &c? For sometime Sukumari madly indulged herself in talks of various kinds of this nature, when Chandrima spoke to her thus from a little distance. Your guess is right! No sooner did this sound reach the ears of Sukumari, than she hurriedly, out of shame of course, concealed the picture

*This Dasaratha was the father of Rama the incarnate. He did not knowingly let fly his arrow against the son of the blind Muni alluded above.

in her cloth. Wooma and Chandrima, the two constant companions of Sukumari, after a good deal of remonstrance to calm her afflicted mind, entered the room and accosted thus. Dear and Excellent princess ! Why do you always show the absence of mind and now and then betray the idiosyncrasy of judgment ? What must be the nature of your secrets ? We are your yoke-fellows so lay them open before us without scruples or reserve. The major part of your life is spent, but as for the remainder you may make it happy by marrying any one you like. What's the good of being miserable by harbouring such thoughts as are far from being realised. Chandrima said, Wooma ! What are you asking about ? Every one knows the ache of his or her own mind and none else. Every one has decided so far only and no further, that the forest gets destroyed with its own fire.

none could see now the fire of passion, that continually burns human mind, like elephants that eat away the carnal within the apples, without affecting much their outward forms. So in like manner, the remembrance of past love-matters has pulled down the internal constitution of Sukumari, the princess, though perceptible changes are scarcely observable in her outward appearance. The princess answered in a sort of epigrammatic joocular tone. Yes, the fire of passion (as you imagine) is actually burning me imperceptibly, but the fire that burns you always can never be extinguished, but, with your end. After this, she spoke to Chandrima. My Dear !, I can have the author of all these anxieties in me at command. But it is absolutely requisite to know before the connection is made, whether is he born of royal blood, or is descended from the race of any order of religious sects, or a supernatural being ? Chandrima said. Why do you (Madam) suffer that unfounded thought to canker your heart ? You can have your own way without hesitation. I went once to the hall in the garden for flowers, where I am come to learn from the venerable Saradwaja Muni of his parentage and other matters in connection with his genealogy. The Muni replied, that the object of love is the son of Jay-sen, the Rajah of Jaypore. The answer was quite satisfactory. A magnificent

building was erected for the celebration of the Sayambara.* The adjacent kings and sovereigns had flocked in from all quarters, some in the carriages drawn by horses and some on the backs of elephants. Besides the learned pundits had thronged the palace to see the nuptial ceremony. Sukumari the princess putting on marriage apparel reached the appointed place at the appointed hour of the day in company with her favorite companions. All the kings and rulers had cast their eyes solely towards the beautiful bride, who seemed like the lightning in the cloudy sky to have peeped and shone refulgently in the midst of the countless stars and directed her step straight way towards the bridegroom without casting a glance even to any one else. At last, she yielded her hand to Basanta Coomar and then returned home. The other Rajahs, who were then present there knew not who this Basanta Coomar was. Consequently they laughed at the king Anandamaya for such a shameful condescension, which is derogatory to his hereditary excellency. The Reverend Saradwaja, who was then present in the marriage hall, began to welcome those Rajahs and spoke thus to remove their doubts concerning the pedigree of the bridegroom. God Almighty has entrusted you all with the responsibility of thousands of men, whose lives and honor are at your mercy. You are authorised by virtue of your exalted position and divine blessings to judge of what is right and what is wrong, and to reward to the doer of the one and inflict punishment to the other. If you therefore in an indifferent state of mind, inflict punishment upon an innocent one, the most terrific result is sure to attend you. Unfounded suspicion like ivy does not only destroy the plants and the other small trees, but at last destroys the very same tree, that like its mother provided it constantly with its own sap to prolong its existence. In like manner suspicion not only injures the suspected, but ultimately causes death to one, in whose breast it arises. It therefore behoves us to trace its origin first before its pernicious effects be felt, either by the unsuspected, or suspector. However dark and dismal might be the hollow of a tree to others, it is

* In ancient times, the Hindoo girls had the same privilege as their sisters in Europe in respect of choosing their husbands and it was called Sayambara.

sufficiently lightsome to the owl itself. So is suspicion, however vain and unfounded it may appear in the judgment eyes of others, looks more like reality to him who unreasonably indulges in it. As owl cannot see in the sunshine of broad day-light any object when it comes out of its dark abode, so man becomes blind of any of those imperfections in his neighbour when suspicion ceases to occupy a seat in his breast. So I advise your Majesty to eradicate as soon as possible, the very germ of suspicion from your breast, ere it takes deep root there.

, Therefore O Kings and Lords! You should n't have laughed at Basanta, if you had tried before to learn the cause of your laughter. You are in vain out of prejudice led to believe, that Lily which is concealed by moss, is thereby divested of its scents. Is it possible for the clay pot to diminish the rufulent lustre of the jewels, when placed in it? The moon light appears faint to the cosmopolitan, when she is overshadowed by the clouds, without her light really being diminished. You have by the judgment of mere external appearance put the prince to groundless exposure. There would have been none dunces and vulgar, had neat and better dress been the criterion of wisdom and a proof of high extraction. The clever and accomplished Sukumari gave her hand to one who is fit for her, in all and every respect. The object of your ridicule, is the son of the mighty king of Jaypore, but out of a misfortune quite of an unforeseen nature, he is fallen in such distress. It is quite inconsistent with your honor, (as kings and rulers) to throw insult on others and treat them in an off hand manner ere you know all the incidents of their lives in all their bearings. The Rajahs having come to learn, all these facts from the venerable Muni departed one after the other, in a calm and quiet mode of countenance. Anandamaya, the king of Amundmagur was hitherto very sorry for not being able to know the respectability of the pedigree of his son-in-law, but the short speech of the wise Saradwaja made him exceedingly glad. Hence he came to learn, that a right move in the right direction is the never failing rule of nature. The wedding ceremony was celebrated agreeably to the custom and etiquette of former times. The Reverend Muni said to Rajah Anan:

damaya. I have fostered and reared up the boy with paternal care almost from his infancy, therefore I am exceedingly anxious to go back to my residence with the bride together with the bridegroom. The Rajah on the other hand in course of the short intervals of questions and answers made every necessary, but at the same time such decent preparation, as reflects credit on His Majesty. Sukumari knowing the approach of the appointed hour of departure, began to shed tears of joy. The heart of her mother the seat of unaffected affection began to get distracted by the thought of final separation in the same way as the surface of the ocean gets shaken by the impulse of the wind and waves. A little after this, Basanta bade adieu to the king and queen by saluting them after the fashion of the time-honored custom of India. In due time, they arrived the abode of the Muni. No sooner was this glad tidings spread all over the locality than all the Rishi women came in flock to the spot to pronounce the benedictions of blessings with shouts and acclamations of joy. Sudakshina, the wife of the wise Saradwaja with unspeakable delight held Sukumari in her fond and affectionate arms and gave out thus. Come! Mother Come! My dear mother! and then went straight way to the side of her room. She further added, that by seeing the spotless beauty of the face of her daughter-in-law, her long cherished hope is crowned with success and her ever afflicted mind is at once cooled. Ah! Who could possibly expect, that a princess would come to grace the humble mansion of a poor and almost beggarly lady of a religious saint! Basanta having spent a few days thus with Sukumari in the residence of his foster parents, set out for Anandanagar, the capital city of Anandamaya his father-in-law. The holy thought of devoting the remainder of his life in prayers and meditations of the wonderful mechanism of the creation and the attributes of the creator in a retired state of life solely occupied his attention. One day, he pushed all these secrets of his mind to the notice of his son-in-law and said thus. Hold the diadem and the other ensigns of royalty and by the right administration of justice, enjoy the happiness of a king. I have spent the three fourths of my life's career in the enjoyment of this world, but as for the remainder one-fourth I intended to pass in

praise and prayer of the almighty, so as to fulfill the object of our mission on earth under human form. To get entangled even these few days with the cares of this phantasmagorian world and not to think at all of the one to succeed is to act below humanity. Human life in human constitution is what a drop of water on the surface of the leaves of lily, none knows when death precisely like wind, would upset the body and thereby cause the life like a drop of water separated from the body. I am therefore exceedingly desirous to isolate myself from the turmoils, hurry and whirl of the worldly affairs, after having let the burden of the Government devolve upon you. Basanta answered. I think it an act of supererogation on my part to hold the reins of Government according to the royal mandates. But I trust so far I am capable of judging, that the best and the safest way for your Excellency to pass your time in prayerful meditation would be to do that more in a rational way in society, than in recluse solitude. His Majesty replied, that though your argument on the subject is not altogether groundless indeed, but the religionists have unanimously passed their judgment to the effect, that society is compounded of an anomalous nature of good and evil, so that the latter is so nicely ingrafted with the former, that it exceeds the power of the social members to lay aside the venom of the one, before they relish the nectar of the other. Wherefore the saints and the monks choose the hollow of a rock, which is far from the habitable quarters of man for their abode. Sometimes they erect a hut on the shore of a river for the purpose of offering their prayers to God at all times without interruption. This silenced Basanta, who at last gave his consent as to take the whole weight of the state in his own hand. His Majesty, having anointed his son-in-law as a king, retired with the queen, with the consent and general approbation of his subjects. The Rajah having fraved the destined place of worship and devotion, addressed the locality with vehement emotion. Ah! Happy solitude, the nurse of all good thoughts. What an unspeakably charming aspect you hold. It is so far free from every fear, that the insects and the grassophers being the enemies of birds, reside in the same nests with them. without any

chance of coming to any harm. The young deer drawing the milk from the teat of the lioness without the least idea of coming to any harm whatever. The shaking of the branches of trees with fruits and leaves, by the impulse of the gentle breeze, induce us to believe, that they out of delight, the offspring of prayers are dancing in way of repeating hymns in praise of the wonderful fiat of the almighty. The feathered tribes are in similar way uttering without anxiety and cessation, but always with their natural voice the wonderful attributes of the Lord of the universe. The inhabitants there of those sacred groves are with the oneness of mind and with the same chorus of hymns singing hallelujahs of one almighty, Omnipresent and Omnipotent God, who rules the day and night and who holds supremacy over the whole visible and invisible creation and whose command the tides of the ocean obey and by whose eternal decree and incomprehensible dispensation, the seasons alternately succeed and precede. His excellency thus reached the abodes of the religionists of all and every order and sect with the sight of perennial joys, that fell under his observation on his way thither.

Here Basanta having had the reins of the sovereignty in his own hand, discharged with univalled applause both the political and domestic affairs. The chief and noble principle of his reign was always to keep a vigilant eye over all, so that he may always be right in awarding just recompense to most deserving and inflicting condign punishment to the wicked. One day, when he was engaged to study a religious book in a certain place alone, after discharging the functions of royalty, Sukuman being present there spoke thus. My sweet heart ! What act of duty have you discharged since you are bound by religious oaths to be my husband ? I have been told by our spiritual guide, that it is a paramount duty of the husbands to instill sound and wholesome lessons with care and diligence in the minds of their wives. It is a duty incumbent upon the husbands to make their consorts the partners of the pleasure they enjoy themselves from the study of the ethical subjects and the unsullied joys, that flow from religious contemplations. If it be found, that a prejudicial notion or bad impression, has out of bad company or wrong education taken a deep root into the mind of a wife, the husband

by right direction and by the cogency of his lecture and persuasive admonition should eradicate them from her mind. Prejudice stunts the growth of the virtuous sentiments, as much as brambles affect the growth of the useful trees in a garden. He who gives all such moral instructions to his wife really discharges the duty of a husband, but he, that married a woman out of a desire to gratify his lustful passion, can seldom discharge all those noble and exalted duties that befit a husband, otherwise he shall have to stand in the character of a delinquent before God and religion. Basanta being highly pleased with this beautiful discussion of his clever consort, said. My dear sweet heart! This prayer of yours has filled my breast with unspeakable joys. The woman in general instead of showing zeal to be eternally profited, rather discover a spirit of discontent, when they are called on to attend these lectures. What can afford greater pleasure, than that you are disposed of your own accord to come to the path, that may raise you to a higher platform of human bliss? Pray let me know what subject would be acceptable to you and I shall dwell there at large. Sukumari said, the best lesson and the fittest one for a respectable lady is to learn, what happiness flows from the cultivation of the virtue of chastity and how far a husband is bound to inculcate this lesson to his wife in an impressive way. Basanta having seized affectionately his consort, gave out thus. O pattern of virtue! The more I ruminate on your proposal of female chastity, the more my heart elates with joy. The religious professors of ancient times have given a long description and in various forms, but I shall give a very compendious sketch on the subject matter and I call your particular attention. Husband is no doubt an object of the highest concern in the eyes of his wife and the fountain spring of all delight. None is so much an object of worship to a wife as husband. A woman is not entitled to reap the benefits of religion unless she would receive the moral precepts direct from her husband. This is of course according to the authority of the Hindoo Shashtra. A woman is enjoined to follow her husband like shadow to the real living being and discharge her duties with the diligence of a most interested friend. She is always required to speak mildly and gently to her husband. She is further required

to discharge her duties without the least blot on her conduct. She must always be above the reach of grovelling tendency. She is never to do a thing in an indifferent tenor of mind. She is ever forbidden to form the picture of any other man in her mind even in process of a dream. She is strictly forbidden to receive even the religious instructions of others, as many under the disguise of lecturers and preceptors ruin her both for time and eternity. A chaste woman after all must cease to frequent the place, where she is to hear ill of her husband and shouldn't stay even the minutest part of a second's time there, where then go talks of various kinds on indecent and obscene subjects. Whatever thoughts spontaneously arise in her, must immediately be brought to the notice of her husband without the concealment of either the part or the whole. She must not forsake her husband, should he out of a dire misfortune be a valitudinarian, a deformed and ugly chap, or a poor, or a dunce. Should a man be in the habit of committing adultery, his wife even there is forbidden to use harsh language, but she must exert her utmost to entice him to detect his own bad conduct. Man holds the privilege* to divorce his wife in case of adulterous conduct on her part, but a woman falls in the eye of religion, provided she repudiates her lord* on the similar ground. The husband must be the subject of her night dream and day vision. She must take him the sole standard of her judgment, the only criterion of her salvation and he must be considered on her part all in all. In fine, without him, nothing is real on earth. Every thing passes with phantasmagorean light. She must be happy in his happiness, but at the same time must feel miserable in his misery then she may be respected even by her superiors. She can then be happy here on earth and hereafter in heaven. Besides these women, the rest are to languish in hell for ever and anon. Basanta Kumar after all was lucky enough to pass his time with an educated, chaste and accomplished and at the same time a pious and virtuous wife. Every day she afforded him a new source and of fresher kinds of pleasures.

* The Hindoo ladies always apply the high sounded appellation to their husbands.* Even the lower class women do that, if they be chaste of course.

CHAPTER VI.

'My dear children' You have heard me repeat often and often, that prosperity and adversity are the allotted portion of humanity and every one becomes the sport of the one or the other alternately. Basanta Kumar, after having taken the reins of government in his own hand, was governing with the good will and the highest eloquence of the people, when all on a sudden a dreadful famine being attended with desperate diseases carried away many to the premature grave. It sprung out so suddenly, as thunders rage without any sign of previous clouds and storms and like the emission of fire in the wood it spreads its devastations far and wide. In course of a very few days, the whole city became the abode of monkeys and other wild beasts. The loud and noisy sound of the vultures and foxes were fatal to the lives of the survivors. The branches of the tallest banian trees, the pinnacles of the monuments and the other high public buildings, the domes of the town halls and the topmost height of other buildings intended to commemorate the victory of the ancient heroes and kings, fell at once to the level of the ground, without leaving a trace of their previous existence. The city was echoed and re-echoed with the noise of the buds, the cry of the canine tribes and the sounds of perpetual murmurs and heart-rending groanings of man and every other ominous sign, that dogmatically foretells the approach of the utter annihilation of the whole kingdom. Both the aristocratic and democratic portions of the city clandestinely convened a council to ascertain the fatal consequences of the evil that threatened their empire. There was then a custom current to the effect, that in case any unexpected calamity quite of an accidental nature befall a kingdom, the head of the state was required to go

to voluntary exile temporarily to step it. It was proposed in the said meeting to apply the same rule to Basanta Kumar, the reigning sovereign, as the dire misfortune has befallen the empire since his ascension on the throne. It was now unanimously thought both advisable and at the same time reasonable to make him at least for a few days away from the kingdom. No sooner was this sad tidings brought to the royal notice, than His Excellency gave all assurances of his abdicating the throne and to go elsewhere, if that be productive of salutary effects on the part of the people. Before he set out, he welcomed one and all frankly and in a smiling tone pronounced these affectionate terms. "My dear people! Whatever memorials have been submitted to me for the good of the state are indeed quite pleasing to you all, though they are not compatible with the dictates of reason. I am glad to comply with the requisition of your memorials. But ere I bid you adieu I shall make some proposals and I confidently trust that you would not hesitate to lay me under obligation in complying with my requests there. In case of any accidental mishap in the state, the wisemen instead of imputing that to the king, rather endeavour to investigate the true cause of it and try their utmost to trace its origin so as to seek its lasting prosperity. You could easily know, that the king is by no means the author of the calamity that threatened the state, with distraction and destruction, if you try to learn the real cause of the diseases, which have baffled the power of unquestionable remedy of the best and the most incontestible medical authority and carried daily thousands and thousands into the premature grave. Try to learn also, why is the violent storm and terrific gales being attended with thunder and lightning cause wreck to the kingdom. All the ancient cities and towns fall in decay in this way, after having reached the plethoric height of their growth in splendour and prosperity. Don't rest yourself assured that the misfortune has left the kingdom with the banishment of the king. It is quite beneath you, (as intelligent beings) to labor under such a vain and deluding impression. That which looks well on your part, as the lord of the creation, is to make strict enquiry as how and where the water and the air are contaminated and whether the confined air of the

neighbourhood of some particular streets and lanes, gardens and meadows being contaminated, became the sole cause of devastation and ruin, or the water the essence of life being affected turned the destructive poison of it. Let there be no lack of exertion on your part to remedy these evils and thereby effectually to elude the grasp of premature death and then you will be able to save your country without delay and unnecessary labor." Having harangued the people thus, he took their consent for departure. Here on the other hand, Sukumari being informed of this sad intelligence came close to the king and declared. "For the good of the state you gave your consent of going elsewhere from the kingdom and I shall be the companion on your way." Basanta to dissuade her said. "You are born of royal blood, very delicately bred up and all along enjoyed the ease of prosperity, but never accustomed to suffer the pangs of adversity." Sukumari returned. "Dear idol of my heart! Husband is the only support of the chaste women and the vital essence of her soul, so what's the good of carrying a dead body which ceases to be the abode of life in the absence of the husband? How far am I reasonable here in this request may easily be known to you, if you once turn your eyes towards Sabita, the wife of Suthoban, Sita, the wife of Ram the incarnate and Damayanti the wife of king Nala. They all accompanied their respective lords to the wild. They willingly and gladly bore all the hardships of life only to alleviate the pain of a long and tiresome journey of their husbands, and thereby secured the blessings of gods and angels and carried away the good will of man below, so I pray you not to thwart my aim to equal them, if not to be in the ascendancy. A social being despite his ample possession cannot command the respect of his neighbour in the absence of a wife rather gets exposed in every respect, whereas a man with a wife in obscurity can have the respect of every one. I shall prefer the hardship of a long and tedious journey, if that afford me the constant opportunity to serve my husband to the insipid happiness of an idle life at home without him. If you be so unkind as to go alone I shall then to exonerate my body the burden of misery, commit suicide." Basanta kept himself silent for a while after which ordered his driver to get ready his chariot, as he was

on his wing to the wild for the welfare of his people. His Majesty's order was forthwith executed. Having then taken leave for departure from the highest officials to the lowest pampered menials, stood at the gate in expectation of Sukumari, who perceiving the approach of the time for the intended expedition, bade adieu to all her neighbour one after the other and spoke with tears in her eyes to her dear associates. "Dear Wooma! Dear Chandrima! I am going in company with my husband, as a voluntary exile to a far wild, wherefore give me the leave with good heart." They on their part said, with tears of affection. "Where did you intend to go leaving us all behind. The pain of separation would grievously touch us, better take us with you." Sukumari answered. "My dear I am out of an unforeseen event compelled to go to the wild. I am not aware in the least of the difficulties I shall have to encounter, but if I survive them I shall be happy again with your company, but in case of otherwise, this is my last." Flood of tears had flowed from her eyes whilst she was speaking thus and her comrades did the same, when they bade her farewell. Thus after mutual exchange of form and courtesy they mounted the chariot, which was speedily driven towards the wild. Both Wooma and Chandrima had cast their steady gaze towards the chariot, as long as it was in sight precisely in the same way the wild hog does with horror and confusion towards the mass of fire. When even the pinnacles were put out of sight they with dejected mood of mind returned home. The chariot having kept behind, countries and villages, towns and cities at last reached a solitary wild. Basanta having intended to travel on foot, ordered the charioteer to turn back homeward with the intelligence. It exceeds the power of language to describe fully the effects of imagination of that interval. It seemed, that virtue, after their departure from the kingdom under a form perceptible to the eye running away from the empire for fear of the attacks of vice and fortune herself appeared to follow her, leaving behind the splendour of the royalty. Thus Sukumari followed her husband, laying behind her every consideration of the pomp and enjoyment of the empire. The road being uneven, rough and craggy, she was unable to move erect. But lest her husband gets vexed with her

slow motion, she bore the pain with exemplary patience and constantly wiped the tears and sweats with her cloth without his knowledge. After proceeding some miles off her body with all its main and branch members gradually became motionless, so she was compelled to fall down, when she was driven and battered by the unsettled blast of contrary wind like the flag of a chariot. But a little before her fall, she called her husband and said. "My Dear, be little slow. I am unable to keep pace with you." Basanta having held her hand spoke thus. "I told you before, that you will feel great difficulty to bear the troubles of a journey. The thought of what might follow next, when we shall have to tread more dreadful lanes and bye-lanes is like arrow piercing my bosom." Having in this way proceeded for some paces, Basanta said again. "See! Dear! See! With what accelerated strides the night is coming to wrap the whole face of nature. It is not far off. Let us with hasty motion reach the residence of some religious devotees. Otherwise we are sure to be torn here by the terrific claws of the lion, or some ravenous animals, or some homivorous giants would drink our blood." Sukumari being afraid here, began to walk faster. Luckily they arrived at the residence of an holy monk. There they passed the night in the character of guests. At the dawn of day, they again stepped forward towards the wild. My dear children! In times of danger, even the educated people lose their sense and being disconcerted take every thing in wrong view, although, he erewhile displayed very keen judgment and extraordinary sense no less than Brihashpati* himself. What else could induce Ram abatar† to pursue the golden deer and thereby gave Raban, his implacable foe, the opportunity to carry away his dear Sita? One day, whilst Basanta was travelling with his wife, a voice seemed to have reached his ears to the effect, as follows. "O dear brother Basanta?" The more he remembered of his brother Bijay Chandra the more his anxieties rose to higher and higher flight. But from which side the

* Brihashpati had such sense, as none was ever able to equal. Therefore when we see extraordinary sense in any one, we in way of proverb say, he is as sensible as Brihashpati himself was.

† Abotar means incarnate.

sound came he couldn't ascertain. The misfortune operated its influence so far, as to induce him to leave behind his wife alone in a far wild and under such a perilous circumstance. One day, after a travel from morning till noon, they sat under the shade of a large wide spreading banian tree for rest. The sun burnt Sukumari, being disfigured like the sapless tender twigs by the heat of the meridian sun and having placed his head on the lap of her lord laid down on the bare ground. But some how or other, being able to catch the secret working of his mind, said "My Dear! Why are the marks of sorrow visible upon your cheek? the very sight of which was a source of consolation to me before. I never saw such bad prognostics before. Why does the heart of this miserable wretch tend this day constantly to the worst vortex? Why is my heart become a prey of unfavourable omen? What beats my breast or why is the motion of my pulse so quick. Why couldn't I fix my mind even for a second's time? What's the matter with me. Why is my right eye dancing? Why do you, my dear stare at me with tears so often and often and breathe with difficulty? Why do you stop in the midst of conversation? I could not interpret the meaning of all these to any other reason, than the approach of ruin upon me with all its oppressive weight." During the intervals of all such lengthy intercourse, sleep insensibly stole upon her. Basanta thought of deserting her by this time. In course of all such desperate thoughts, he slowly and carefully took the head of his wife and laid upon the dust and went away. Ah! What a strange phenomenon is love? In spite of this seeming act of inhumanity on his part, he at intervals made a side glance towards his wife just in the same way as Chuckrobak* does towards the the Chuckrobaki by the approach of evening, purely out of nuptial love. He then thought within himself that to forsake a respectable zennanah lady without fault is really an act of inhumanity. What an awfully miserable fate would attend her in my absence. Whilst he was reflecting thus misfortune under a visible form approached before him and said. "What are you about? Your

* The natives consider this bird in the same light as the Europeans do to the dove, in respect of conjugal love.

elder is quite exhausted. You won't be able to find him, should your wife follow you, better leave her and be quick. Being at once bamboozled with this sense-paralysing hint, he cut the knots and joints of the ties of conjugal love and went away without her. • Here on the other hand, Sukumari continued to sleep alone in the solitary and loansome wild. Some hours after his departure Sukumari awoke, but saw that her husband is no more with her. What a train of desperate thoughts arose then in her. In the first place, she made this reflection, that her lord is purposely concealed himself so as to put her to the cruise of hard-trial. Immediately after, she was troubled with this thought, that her husband must have been carried away by the wolf, or is devoured by the giants, or killed by supernatural beings. In the next place, she thought this also, that considering me merely an useless incumbrance he left me. She had repeatedly called her husband in a loud tone, whilst those deluding thoughts arose in her successively, but having got no answer, she out of despair and fear fell on the ground and began to welter." A little after, as in a fit of actual delirium, she addressed her own eyes in way of reprimanding. Ah Eyes ! I kept you merely to act the part of a guide, but you betrayed me. Ah cunning and ungrateful sight ! You betrayed me, being a chief member of the whole body I must impute the loss of my doll* to your detestable treachery. In his absence, every creek and corner of the habitable world seem in my eyes wrapped up with darkness. Ah perfidious wretch ? I did you every service with superhuman care and the consequence stood thus. It was far distant from my expectation, that the jewel† of my heart shall ever have the chance of being lost in the gloomy depth of the wood. I never wronged any one even in a dream. Who then out of revengeful feeling injured me to this extent ? Ah sad and cruel misfortune ‡ I having relinquished the enjoyments of royalty sought

* Alluding to her husband.

† Lots of high sounded appellations are applied to her husband in way of epithets.

‡ According to the principle of the native idea, misfortune is taken here a goddess, through whose rancorous machinations, even a wing man become a ridiculous object of laughter, Socrates committed suicide through her malice.

refuge in an unknown dark and loanseme wood with my husband and you didn't spare me even here. Ah! What an awfully sad chance is this? What would become of me now? Where and from whom could I expect relief? Who would shield me now from the impending danger? Ah parents! Ah beloved associates! Wooma and Ohundrima where are you now all? I am recklessly thrown alone in this loanseme and frightful retreat. You just condescend to relieve me. Ah! sylvan gods! Be a help to this poor and helpless wretch. I pray you to assume forms in order to show me the road my husband trod. 'Tis past my power to bear the pain of separation from my husband. Ah fate! There is none here in this distant wood, but thee. So none but thee must have stolen my husband. It is thy province to make one the sport of prosperity and the other the object to be ruthlessly tossed on the bed of adversity. If thou sayest, that my husband is carried away by the wolf, even there I shall find fault with thee as thou under the disguise of a wolf hast killed him, with intent to make me the object of thine fun and joke. But if thou makest this excuse again that my husband out of wrong judgment left me alone here, there I ascribe likewise the fault on thy part, as his judgment was vitiated through thy spell-like influence. Thou art the author of all evils, whatever they may be, or in whatever light may they be considered. Therefore I pray thee with all my might and strength to spare his life, but as for my own, I am willing to surrender it to thy tyrannical will. He is an object of the highest concern, so have mercy upon him. Pray help him in times of distress. Be not niggard to give him instantaneous relief, when he would be tired and exhausted. Gradually the sun began to sink down, when she prayed with her face towards heaven. O just and merciful Lord! Thou art the friend of the friendless and the great help to the helpless. This miserable servant of thine is fallen in great distress, so extend thy helping hand to save her life and preserve her from the scandalising stain on the spotless page of her life. Thus having gone some distance off, she saw the view of a temple made of stones and marbles brightened with the lustre and mild brilliancy of the countless stars in the firmament close to a mountain. She also beheld there a woman with full of

ornaments sitting on the step of a stone staircase, crying with the following pathetic tone. Ah dear husband! Ah sweet heart! This wonderful and unexpected sight relieved Sukumari a little. It is natural for humanity to feel somewhat relieved, when one sees another in similar distress and he or she becomes eagerly curious to learn the main cause of his or her neighbour's distress. She thought within herself that the stranger must be the victim of the distress of the same category. She is also bewailing like me the endless pain of separation from husband. At last coming near to her, asked thus. 'Dear Sister! Why do you yell. The stranger said. Why do you so politely address me in way of long and close intimacy? My long afflicted heart is cooled and quieted by your modest enquiry. Sukumari returned again. No I didn't apply the epithet dear to you, but to your misfortune which is exactly like mine and without which I have had not the chance of an easy access to your person; therefore I shall in way of gratitude apply the title dear to none, but to the misfortune wherever and in whomsoever could I find her. For you are travelling here with a murmuring sound akin to my own and the last object of enquiry tends to the same point. The stranger making Sukumari sit close by her, said,—it appears, my dear! from the features of your physiognomy, that you must have been closely and dearly related to me in a previous life. Whatever might be the fact, I simply ask you this. What hand of affliction must have driven you here in this awful solitude. As tears spontaneously flow out from the eyes, when one speaks of the sad reverses of fortune before his or her dear and intimate friend, so Sukumari burst out into loud fit of outcries with constant drops of tears in her eyes, when she was relating the particulars of the sad career of her life. The stranger observed in way of consoling her,—am I not melted with your misery precisely in the same way as the eldest does towards the youngest in distress? The youngest said in return,—that's the reason I am actuated to show you the obedience and submissive affection of the youngest sister. It seems, as I have spent a long time with you, but separated only since a very few days. Whatever may be the matter, I shall behave towards you in the style of a sister. Sukumari said, that the very sight of your's begat in me a desire of veneration towards

your person. I felt the same relief, as one does when she gives an account of her mishaps to her own sister. Therefore be you my eldest sister. Both began to converse in this way. At last Sukumari said,—my dear *didī* !* I am very curious to know the nature of the distress that has exposed you thus here. The stranger answered. Dear Sister ! It requires greater latitude of time to give a detailed account under each of the encyclopedic head of my misfortune. Let us now wash our hands and face and enter the temple. So long we couldn't see our husbands, we would talk together of the nature of our respective calamities. With this word, they entered the temple. The eldest commenced thus. There reigned a king by the name of Ramanimohun. I am his only daughter. My name is Bimala. My father lost his life in a battle, when I was a girl of five years old. This misfortune my mother bore with patience, but as I grew a little I became a source of consolation to her. The functions of royalty were then devolved upon the prime-minister. My mother despite her exemplary assiduity could not succeed in having a fit one to marry me, on condition of passing the whole career of his life under her maternal roof. Subsequently chance herself was able to accomplish, what previous and deliberate scheme failed so often. Of those elephants, which my father had brought, when he had returned from the expedition, of deer hunting, one was highly endeared to him. He used to take almost always that favourite elephant with him, wherever he frequented. The elephant in return used to hold the throne of my father with his trunk during the time of his bath. My father was in the habit of cleansing the body of the animal by his own hand, which made the sagacious animal endeared to him more and more. After the death of my father, the animal went away in a deep jungle out of sorrow no doubt. The chief minister was no way unsparing in his efforts to prevent his going away from the kingdom, but to no avail at all. After the lapse of some years, the elephant unexpectedly came back one day with a boy of a very handsome make, who was afterwards married with me, and whom

* *Didī* the feminine of *Dada*. The meaning of the former is the eldest sister and the latter the eldest brother.

the animal held by his task. Every one was struck with amazement at the sight. No sooner was this dropped from her mouth, than the other said, My dear sister ! It seems from your own account, that your husband, who did not return with water to quench the thirst of his brother, may no doubt be the brother of my husband. After that, the elephant at once placed the boy, who was held by his tusk on the throne of my deceased father. Being asked of his genealogy, he gave the same account, what was given before by the other man, who went to look after water for his youngest brother. He was compelled to leave his youngest brother alone in that awful retreat. Providentially, the mad elephant all on a sudden brought him to the palace. No sooner did the eldest hear, that his brother was left alone, in that perilous retreat, than his voice thickened with sorrow. Drops of water instantaneously began to flow from his eyes. The chief of the state hearing all these, sent for Basanta from all parts of the empire, some on horse back and some afoot. My dear Sister ! said Bima-la. It appears, from your own accounts, that the venerable Saradwaja Muni, had carried away Basanta before the envoys were sent, consequently they had to return without finding him. This news had at once bambóozled the intellectual faculties of my husband Bijaya Chandra. However his grief gradually began to decay with the progress of his recovery. My mother being struck with the uncommon powers of his understanding and the incredible progress of his learning married me with him on a very lucky and auspicious day. Afterwards he began to govern the empire of my father with the consent of all the subjects. One day, I had told him to go to a far wild, where there was built a magnificent hall by order of my father. It was erected chiefly for the purpose of beguiling the tediousness of leisure in mirth and merriments. If he have no objection, he can go and study there the nature of the feathered tribes. He was agreed to accede to my request. We passed a few days there in varieties of jokes and funs. But one day, he had suddenly burst out into tears with the expression as follows. Ah Basanta ! My dear brother, the vital soul of my life ! Where are you gone now ? I asked him about often and often, but instead of giving any answer, he directed his step like a

mad man towards the desolate wood, where I followed him, but being unable to ascertain the place where he went away hastily, I reached here through the secret bower. A few days after having found this convenient abode, I continued to live here alone. Bimala having related all the incidents of her life, said, My dear sister ! The term sister is justly applied to you, as it plainly proves from the concord and agreement of the accounts of both, that your husband is the youngest of my husband. Having said this, both began to weep. The day dawned once again upon the face of nature. Bimala now heard a voice to this effect. Ah ! What is come to pass. After a long and wearied journey I failed to make out the clue of their sudden elopement. Where are they gone to, or what is become of them. Some were whispering thus, that the very thought of what may become of the queen, on receipt of this sad tidings is heart rending. She has only one daughter who is the only means of support and consolation to her on earth. If she couldn't see her daughter and son-in-law for a small jot of time, she starts with horror and amazement on all directions like the lost calf. Let us see there in the temple in view. Having said thus, they all directed their steps towards the temple. Bimala said. Dear sister ! Be no longer afraid of. The Minister himself is coming in company with a large number of troops to search us. Having uttered this they stood at the threshold of the holy shrine. The minister beholding them from a little way off and coming nearer and nearer to them, said. Why do you both husband and wife rove in a wild, that is the abode of ravenous tigers and wolves. If the object of your mission be to visit the holy shrine, why didn't you take some of your associates ? Where now is the Moharaj ? Bimala having related all that had passed began to shed tears. The minister in way of consoling her, said, My dear child ! Cry no more. I shall very soon get him here. But at the same time, his constant stead-fast gaze at Sukumari, enabled Bimala to catch the internal guess of her youngest and she gave every account for her, in the manner of an interpreter, so as to make every one acquainted with each other. All that heard it, were astonished. But the Minister said. My dear Bimala ! It appears from the very homo-

geniety of your countenance, that Sukumari is your youngest sister. He then advised all to run to the palace, who accordingly went there unitedly. After their arrival there in the palace, the Rani expressed her deep sorrow for the supposed death of her son-in-law. But to know, what the matter really is, she sent ambassadors all over the empire to look after her son-in-law. But to no effect. So it was at last agreed upon by the general consent of all to spread a rumour for the information of the public, that Bimala and Sukumari are to be married again. If the brothers named Bijaya Chandra and Basanta Kumar be alive, they are sure to make their appearance to Bejaynuggur immediately after they see the advertisement. Envoys were ordered to travel far and near with the advertisement. The Rajahs of distant lands flocked in to the court in a large and numerous body. The Rev. Saradwaja and Rajah Anundomoy together with his Rani expressed their deep regret, when they were told, that Basanta voluntarily had gone an exile for the good and welfare of the state. Amongst others Rajah Joy Sen also went to the place of general rendezvous to satisfy his curiosity. On the other hand, Bijaya Chandra and Basanta Kumar having been informed, that Bimala and Sukumari are to be married again, had come with all speed to Bejaynuggur in a state of worries and cares of mind. They instead of rushing on at once prudently stood out of the palace out of a fear of insult from the guards, simply because they were then highly reduced and disfigured by the rude hand of affliction. Adversity wrought so wonderful a change in them, that they cast their eyes at each other's face, without being able to recognise mutually. They began to converse with each other, as with strangers. Basanta Kumar said. What's the good of thinking this and that without aim. Let us enter into the assembly. Bijaya said, it ill fits us to venture without knowing previously the laws and bye-laws of the community. Basanta without further delay entered first. The guard somehow or other having recognised Bijaya Chandra requested him to go into without scruples, though he was not in fight order then. Bijaya thought, that the guard must have come to recollect his face but out of fear dared not give out the secrets so he entered, but sat just behind the guests.

Bimala having recognised and seen her husband from one of the windows, said by the movements of her fingers. My dear sister! My husband is present, just see there, but without knowing anything as to the arrival of your husband I am exceedingly aggrieved. Sukumari said, he is also come. Both then began to behold their respective lords from a far off. It was previously arranged as to the mode to be adopted for the purpose of receiving those Rajahs, who were invited on the occasion, as well as of giving them farewell in a manner, that may reflect credit both on the inviters and the invited, when they would depart after the ceremony is over. Bimala and Sukumari having enclosed in a long letter all the incidents of the lives of their husbands and the particulars of the life of Rajah Joy Sen up to that date delivered it in the hand of a female punka-puller with order to hand it over to the prime-minister with request to read it in the presence of those in the court. No sooner was it delivered, than the minister read it aloud, and said this also.. You are all in a manner become unconscious under the drowsy influence of sleep. A short while more you are requested to listen with undivided attention, as very little of the letter is left unfinished and I shall soon end it. But if I am required to say of those what are described in the shape of a story by Bimala and Sukumari in respect of all the circumstantial memoirs and accounts of the two brothers named Bijaya and Basanta's life, we are to tire the patience of the audience, as we are to do from the very birth of those princes up to the present date. That would be a mere repetition, so I must avoid that. You better guess about on the matter by meditation. The best thing required of you here is to listen with attention, what I shall say concerning the contents of this letter. The main purport of the letter was so pathetic, that the perusal of a portion of it had melted Joy Sen, Rajah of Joypore so far, as to shed tears, which excited Bijaya to weep and last of all Basanta Kumar, could not refrain from joining. Afterwards, the minister commenced the sorrowful tale of Sukumari, Rajah Anandamoy was unable to withhold tears, although he was then isolated from the concerns of this world. Saradwaj Muni tried to stop him. However his cries served as a right clue for them to know of their connection with

each other. Bijaya having held fast the neck of Basanta with his right arm began to weep. Resurrection of long buried thoughts of sorrows was seen in a new form. Basanta began to comfort his brother, by the time, he was engaged to wipe off his own tears. The visitors and others were all affected at first sight with the cries of one of those chiefs, who were present, but having come to learn afterwards the concluding portion of the letter, they all with oneness of mind levelled down their reproaches upon Joy-Sen, the Rajah of Joypore, the author of all the calamities, that befell those princes named Bijay Chunder and Basanta Kumar. After the departure of all, Rajah Joy Sen called both the princes before him and addressed them in a pitiable tone, that though the parents may highly be guilty before their offsprings, in various shapes yet it does not behove the children to forsake their parents on any plea however reasonable may it really be. The two brothers having comforted their parent had gone with the venerable Muni to kneel down before Rajah Anundomoy to pay him due homage. They together with their respective consorts came to the Zennah of Rajah Romoumohun. Here unexpectedly those two ladies named Bimala and Sukumari having seen their father-in-law and and mother-in-law, began to shed tears of joy. Thus they happily passed the day during the intervals of their mutual talks, as to the names of their respective countries and the family they descended from and several other subjects of kindred nature. The resurrection of long buried thoughts of sorrows of by gone times, began to dash like billows to tear the bosom of Bimala and Sukumari when they saw their husbands in the night. But both of them having confessed their past folly and having entreated in a very exceedingly obliging tone to be forgiven, were able to reconcile their wives. The Reverend Saradwaj and Rajah Anundomoy after a rest for a few days at Bejoypore took their fare well. Bijaya and Basanta being curiously eager to see after a long tedious time Santha, their pet and old nurse proceeded to Joypur with their wives. On the other hand Santha the mother like nurse was as much delighted at the happy intelligence of the return of those two princes, as the poor, humble and the destitute beggars in expectation of a sure gain of heaps of gold, or like the

blind man at the recovery of his long-lost sight. At that time, she reached the maximum age of life, and was worn out and pulled down more with cares and diseases of various kinds, than with age, had scarcely strength enough to move some paces only, without the helping rod of the age, but the sanguine hope of seeing her fostered children, who were long before believed to have been consigned to the grave, gave a strength, which youth-hood itself, in defiance of its energy and vigour, can successfully compete with. Both the husbands and the wives having alighted from their chariots bowed down before her, with every mark of motherlike respect and then went to the Zennanah to do homage to their step-mother, who poured forth upon them every-blessing and after making her daughters-in-law sit close by her, began to ask, how the connections are made and other circumstances appertaining to it, in all their bearings. The two brothers stopped for a while at Jaypore and then proceeded up to their fathers-in-law. After the death of Rajah Jay Sen, they included the kingdoms of their fathers-in-law, which came to them by right of inheritance with their paternal empire. After a glorious reign of some years, when the effects of curse ceased to operate their pernicious influence upon them, they happily launched into the world to come, or the region of eternal bliss. Here the venerable Saradwaj Muni having thus finished the story, proclaimed thus. "My dear children! You must have heard it from the religionists, that in consequence of curse even the divinities* suffer a great deal. So if a member of the *rif-raf* class being offended pronounces curse even upon a Brahmin, the effects can never fail to operate on the score of his being a member of the worshipful class." The definite object of the whole thread of this long story is to forewarn the readers against hurting the feelings even of those who are below us. In case they curse we can by no means get rid of

* Means here celestial beings, who in consequence of some misdeeds and having been cursed thereof must be born under human form to expiate every thing and atone of their sins and then go up to the higher, or lower heaven, whence they came down. This is according to the opinion of the Hindoos of course.

its pernicious effects, without condign atonement either in this or after life. If any were to ignore the fact, he can for satisfaction's sake turn his eyes towards Bijaya and Basanta, who had suffered so much for some or other misdeeds of previous life no doubt.

TARAVATI:

A TALE,

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH.

BY

RAJAH COMM. SOURINDRO MOHUN TAGORE,

Mrs. Doc., C. I. E., &c., &c., &c.



Calcutta:

PRINTED BY J. C. BOSE & CO., STANHOPE PRESS, 219, LOW-BAZAR
STREET, AND PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR.

1881.

[All rights reserved.]

PREFACE.



YEARS ago the following legendary tale was written by my-revered mother. From motives of filial piety, I undertook the translation of the work ; and now present the reader with the following pages.



TÁRÁVATÍ.

A TALE.

ON the east of India lay the extensive kingdom of Magadha. In it lived a very wealthy man, named Dayásindhu, a spice merchant. In consideration of his immense wealth, he also went by the name of Dhanapati, or the lord of wealth. He had a wife divinely beautiful and crowned with every virtue. Her name was Táravatí. The merchant and his consort pined for want of a son, for which they unceasingly prayed to God in heaviness of heart, and celebrated many religious ceremonies. Of a night, as Táravatí lay alone on a fresh bed, after having, during the day, observed the *Astamí Vrata** and worshipped Chandiká, she dreamt that a surpassingly beautiful girl of eight, decked from head to foot, and wearing a piece of red silk cloth, sat on Táravatí's bed, and with a smiling countenance and in mellow tones, addressed the sleeping fair one thus, "Táravatí! thou art a virtuous lady. I am well pleased with thy devotions. Listen to me! Go to the *asvattha* tree, which stands on the east of the village. On the north-eastern side of it, under about two yards of ground, thou wilt find a pot made of eight

* This religious ceremony is celebrated by Hindu females on the eighth day of the lunar fortnight.

metals, and an image of the Lion-riding goddess.* Before the day breaks, go to the place, with thy husband, and unearthing the pot and the image, take them out. Then raising a large temple on the site, establish the image in it, and worship it with all the sanctimonious rites. By this means, thou wilt soon be blest with a son, bearing all the marks of future greatness, as well as with a daughter, graced with every virtue." Filled with delight at this dream, as Tárávatí stretched out her arms to hug in the damsel to her bosom, she smiled and "was no more. Tárávatí awoke. She looked around, but saw nothing. She was then lost in thought, when lo! a divine voice said, "Tárávatí! tarry no more. Up and go to the place with thy husband. At break of day, it will be filled with people." Hearing this extra-mundane sound, she hied to the couch of her lord, and seeing him asleep, thought, that to awaken him was wrong; but then the divine behest must be obeyed. She decided for the latter. Thinking this, as she laid her hand upon the feet of Dayásindhu, he awoke, and rising up, said to his wife, "My love, is it morning?" Tárávatí said, "Light of my eye, it is hardly day—it is near day-break. Love, I have dreamt a wonderful dream to-night, and heard a divine voice, which I have hastened here to tell you." Dayásindhu became curious. Tárávatí related all. Having heard it, her husband said, "My love, you are perfection itself;

* Durgá—the consort of Siva and personification of the cosmic force—rides on a lion.

and I am blest with the possession of such a treasure!" Then Dayásindhu and his wife, accompanied with their servants, went to the *asvattha* tree. The merchant-prince sang a hymn in praise of Mahámáyá, and directed his men to dig the ground for about two yards. They fell to digging the place, until they came to the pot composed of eight metals. Dhanapati took it up reverentially with his own hands, and gave it to his partner. Táravatí placed it on her head, and stood there. Then Dhanapati took up the image of the Lion-riding goddess. Táravatí placed the pot before the goddess and bowed down to the deity, with her husband. They then went back to their house, to bring the necessary things for worship. It waxed late, and folks began to gather round the place where the goddess was found, and there was noise and bustle. The merchant pitched a camp on a cleaned spot and established the image in it. The people of the village and the friends and acquaintances of Dhanapati extolled him and bestirred themselves to bring the priest and to procure the necessary things, such as flowers. In time the people came with the family priest and other Brahmins versed in the Vedas, as well as with the necessary articles. The merchant welcomed the Brahmins and spread cushions for them. They sat down and applauded and blessed him. Dhanapati in all humility paid his reverence to the Brahmins and said, "Sires, favor me with worshipping the goddess, in due form." "Very well, sir," returned they, and set about the business. Táravatí now came

there in a palankeen, guarded by a body of men. When the Brahmins had done, Táravatí and her husband were engaged in worshipping and hymning the image. When they had finished their devotions, they fed the Brahmins sumptuously, and gave them *ḍakhindā*;* then they fed the poor people. After having discharged every duty, Dhanapati returned to his palace with his wife. Afterwards, he erected an alabaster temple for the goddess, with a theatre and a garden and tank adjoining, the last being furnished with four sets of stairs. The place gradually became a place of trade, and people flocked there, to pray the image, for having their desires. The place thus obtained the name of Chandítalá."

After some time, through the blessings of Chandíká, Táravatí was with child. When it was full ten months, Táravatí fell in throes and gave birth to a son and a daughter bearing all the auspicious marks. Dhanapati now considered himself the happiest of men and distributed money and alms to Brahmins and the poor. When the time for *Annaprásana*† came, he celebrated the ceremony and named the twins, Srimanta and Ketakí, the former for the male, the latter for the female child. In time, Srimanta shone out like the summer sun in his meridian

* After feeding the Brahmin, the host gives him a small amount of money—generally a silver piece, which may be looked upon as the price of the condescension on the part of that prime of men.

† When the child is six months old, the parents celebrate a religious ceremony, on the occasion of which, it first tastes rice and receives a name.

glory, and the daughter beamed like the autumnal moon. And this made the hearts of their parents glad. In a short time the boy and the girl became proficient in many sciences and arts. Hearing the praises of Srimanta and Ketakí, match-makers* from various countries began to flock into Magadhá. Dhanapati married with great pomp and splendour his son to the daughter of Vadra Sen, Raja of Rámnagar, and his daughter, to Rámnáth, son of Sankara Dutt of Rájnagar. The marriage of Ketakí was celebrated the day following that of the marriage of Srimanta. Dhanapati kept his son-in-law at his own residence. When Srimanta and Rámnáth came of age, he initiated them into the mysteries of his profession, and said, "I will reward each of you according to his deserts, in his line." Encouraged by their governor, both the young men shone in business, and riches began to pour into the treasury. Gratified with their success, Dhanapati gave each of them a precious diamond ring. The young people were delighted, and addressed themselves to their duties with increased vigour.

Of a certain night in summer, Srimanta woke during the small hours and said to Rámnáth, "Ho Rám ! I am very much oppressed with heat. Let us walk out into the garden and refresh ourselves with the cool breeze blowing over the tank." They thereupon came to the place, and began to eye the beauty of the garden. The moon was beaming mild ;

* The Hindus have a class of professional match-makers.

the fish were gliding in rows by the bank; the vernal gale was blowing on all sides, laden with fragrance from the blooming blossoms; the cuckoo was pouring forth its throat melodiously; various trees in rows beautified the grove; the night-birds were screaming over ripe juicy fruits, the stones of which dropped to the bottom of the trees. The east gradually began to blush and brighten—the luminary of night was about to ‘hide his diminished head.’ Seeing all this, Rāmnāth said to his companion, “See! see! my friend, how the Moon is dancing in the liquid mirror!” Srimanta replied, “Nay, not so; the Moon is agitated for grief of Kumudini, who has veiled herself, seeing that her beloved was about to depart.”*

They were talking thus, when a stalwart ascetic appeared before them with a smile. The personage had long whiskers, his hair was matted and hung down behind his head. His body was covered with ashes, he had a *rudrāksha* rosary on his neck, and he bore a trident in his hand. Srimanta rose up, paid his reverence to the holy man, and stood before him. The ascetic blessed Srimanta and asked, “Srimanta, can you recognise me now?” The young man replied, “I think I have seen you somewhere, sir; I don’t remember it clearly.” “Nandīkeswar,”† rejoined the figure, “has sent me here, to bring you

* It is a classical conceit that the Kumudini or water-lily, is the spouse of the Moon; as the Kamalini or lotus is that of the Sun.

† An attendant of Siva.

in mind of your former life. Hark!" Saying this, he narrated all the facts in detail, and gave a flute to Srimanta. "Hie you to the Sandal wood, and deliver Promodini." The ascetic said this and vanished. When the holy man had disappeared, the mind of Srimanta became highly agitated. He said to his companion, "My friend, bear tidings of my leaving my home, for a distant country, to my dear parents. Farewell!" "It is not proper for you to go to a distant land alone, leaving me behind," replied his companion. "I shall be able to help you in time of trouble, if I be by you. I shall therefore join you." Youth is the season of curiosity; but seeing the eagerness of Rámnáth, Srimanta said, "If both of us were to go, we should acquaint father of this, by letter, and then go away privately." Having determined on this, they gave a letter to a warder of their house and departed. When the man delivered the note to Dhanapati, he read it and hastened with the tidings to his wife. On hearing this, Táravati's eyes filled with tears; she said, "My love, at once despatch men in search of them. I shall go to the temple of the goddess and fast for three nights. Should good news reach in the meantime, I will live—else I will put an end to this existence." Dhanapati despatched men in different directions. Táravati became disconsolate for the absence of her son, and became engaged in prayers to the goddess.

On the other hand, Srimanta and Rámnáth travelled through various countries, and at last arrived at

the country, called Udra where they spent a night at the house of the court pandit of Vijay Singha, prince of the place. Táravatí having fasted full three nights, the goddess was well pleased with her and said in an aerial voice, "Táravatí, fear not! Rise up. I am always protecting thy child. This day two weeks, thy Srimanta will come to thee, with his new bride and Rámnáth." Comforted thus, Táravatí rose up and paid her obeisance to the image. She then returned to her home with a cheerful heart, and related all to her husband. "No need of anxiety now!" said she, "let us prepare dress and ornaments for the bride." The merchant and his consort made the preparations, and remained expecting the pair.

When Srimanta and Rámnáth awoke at the house of the court pandit of Udra, they saw that the Moon was about to set and that the King of day was coming, 'rejoicing in the east.' The birds were tuning their throats. They rose, and after having finished their morning devotions, went in the direction of the Sandal wood. After proceeding some way, they met with some husbandmen, tilling the ground. The young men came up to them and asked, "My friends, how far is it to the Sandal wood?" Hearing this interrogatory, the men replied, "From what country do your honors come? And why do you enquire for the Sandal wood?" "We are bound for that wood," answered Srimanta. At this, a hoary-headed swain said, "So please your honors, listen to the mystery of the place. Formerly, there was a city, named

Uddípaní, by the forest, laved by the river Sálí. In it lived a wealthy merchant, named Priyamvada Sen. He had two wives. Priyamvada was a voluptuous person. One day, he was sporting with his second wife in the water, when a devotee faced him. The soft king was so intoxicated with the sport, that he did not break it even at the sight of the sage. Incensed at the complete self-abandonment of the king to Paphian pleasures, the holy man said, 'Wretch, darest thou slight me, because of thy wealth?' For this, thy paramour shall live a bird in this wood. Thou shalt die on the instant; and this teeming city shall be a wilderness.' In virtue of this curse, Priyamvada met his end then and there, and his love was converted into a bird of the Sandal wood. Thereafter a tiger began to commit havoc on the inhabitants. Seeing this, the citizens began to desert the city. Since then, I have been living at this place, leaving Uddípaní. The wood is not far off. There is a mountain two miles distant. Ascending to the top of it, you will see the Sálí river. The forest on the other side is the forest you seek. Now it goes by the name of the Frightful forest. If any man chance to go there, he dies out of hand. Only the fishermen fish in the river. I have heard from their lips that no sound is heard of any living soul, save that a female bird sings on a bough of a tree on the river. Sirs, from your appearances, I ween that you come of respectable and rich parents. For some cause or other, you have come to a far

country, in grief. I am a clown, and it ill beseems me to advise men like you. Still, I beseech you with clasped hands, not to go to the Sandal wood, by any means. Should you go there, slighting my warning, you will most probably lose your lives." "Never fear, friend," said Śrīmanta, "pray, show us the right way and tell us how to cross the river and come to the wood." The swain said, "Excuse me, but I look upon you as doomed. If you must go to that fatal place, that's the way. After passing the forest in front, you will come upon a mountain, ascending which, you will see the Sandal wood, on the other side of the river. Fishermen fish there in boats. They will ferry you over, for a trifle."

Agreeably to this direction, Śrīmanta crossed the forest in front and came to the mountain in question; whereupon his joy knew no bounds. He ascended the mountain, and found that what the husbandman had said, was true. But as the day had waxed late, the fishermen had gone home, after fishing. So the travellers were obliged to stay there for the night. "Now came still evening on"—Śrīmanta looked at the wished-for wood, and stayed in the mountain for the night. Rāmnāth brought fruits; when the female bird began to sing thus:—

Song.

"My love—my love ! where is he gone ?
 For him I pine a bird alone.
 I've lost my love through Fortune's frown ;
 The Morrow brings my wronger down."

Srimanta was enraptured and astonished at this song, and said to his companion, "Hark! hark! my friend. You have never heard a bird sing more sweetly." So they both listened intently to the strains. When the bird ceased, Srimanta and Rāmnāth fed on the fruits, and reposed in the mountain. When the day broke, the sun looked like a heap of Javá-flowers. The bird, seeing no signs of her beloved on the appointed day, began to think, "It is strange! Will the word even of the ascetic prove untrue, for my bad luck? Then, there is no use of dragging on this miserable life." Having determined on self-destruction, she perched on a vakul tree by the stream.

On the other hand, Srimanta and Rāmnāth stood expecting a boat. When a boat came, Rāmnāth went to the men and said, "Ho fishermen, we intend to cross the stream. Pray, ferry us over." Hearing this, the fishermen laughed and said, "From what country do you come, sirs? Don't you know that the entrance into the Sandal forest is death? We shan't be able to row you over." Saying this, they departed. Then Rāmnāth said to an old fisherman, with misgivings, "Friend, do ferry us over, and you shall have a hundred coins." At this tempting offer, the Triton thought, "I have never seen one hundred coins together, in my life. I have not long to live; and this sum would maintain my wife and sons easily." The man consented. The young man delivered the money to the fisherman, and entering into the boat, they were

about to leave the shore, when the wife of the man appeared on the scene and ejaculated, "Halloa! what for are you bound for the Sandal wood? I have never given you one hard word. Why then are you bent on self-destruction? When you are gone, who would maintain us?" The woman began to weep and wail. "Carry home the sum," replied her husband, "which these gentlemen have given me. I will just ferry their honors over and return." At this, the woman said, "For this trifling sum, I shan't be able to risk your life. If they give a thousand coins, I shall fasten a rope to your boat, and sit in another, on this side of the stream. As soon as the gentlemen alight, I will pull your boat off the shore. If they agree to this, I can give my consent." Srimanta agreed, and taking out a diamond ring from his finger, gave it to the fisherwoman. She laughed at this, and said, "Is this your thousand coins. Why? This is a bit of glass. I don't require this." "Good wife," said her husband, "do not slight these gentlemen. This ring must be of high price—no doubt of that. I well know the value of this ring. Once on a time, such a gem belonging to our Prince had fallen into the water. I rescued it, and received a handsome reward for it. The minister said that the price of the ring was a thousand coins. This ring is not inferior to the other one. We shall get a thousand coins for it, if we sell it to a merchant." Then the fisherwoman tied a rope to her husband's boat, and sat in another, of larger

dimensions. The fisherman launched his smaller skiff with Srimanta and Rámnáth. The female bird, in the meantime, had wept bitterly, and plunging in the tide, was trying to make away with herself, when she saw two boats appearing in the middle of the stream, one of which was comparatively large. Seeing this, she thought, "Perhaps the word of the prophet will prove true, after all. Let me see which way the boats take." Thereupon, she watched their course eagerly. When the smaller boat neared, she saw in it two young men, and an old boatman; in the other, and larger one, sat an old woman, holding fast a rope. When the skiff neared the shore, she saw a young person, resembling her paramour in form and features. "Ah!" exclaimed she, "will it again be given to me, to bless my eyes with the sight of that beloved countenance? O God! what more shall I suffer?" Looking steadfastly at the young man, she observed a mark on his person, and knew it to be certain that he was her own lost love, beyond the shadow of a doubt. She thought, "Let me now sit amidst the foliage, and see where they direct their steps." When the boat had well nigh reached the shore, the fisherwoman pulled the rope and cried, "For God's sake, do not go further near the shore. Tell them to go out on land. Should they not heed you, throw them into the water." "What, man?" exclaimed Rámnáth, "if we have to swim from here to the shore, we shall do it, after drowning both of you, husband and wife, with the boats." The fisherman

trembled, and said, "Sirs, I haven't told you anything. Why then are you wroth with me? Pray, be at ease. I will anon land you on the shore." He immediately landed his skiff. Srimanta and Rámnáth jumped on land, and entered the forest. The fisherman, with his wife, went home.

On entering the wood, Srimanta said, "My friend, how beautiful are these trees bending beneath their weight of fruits. The fragrance of blowing flowers, mingling with the scent of the Sandal trees, is being perpetually wafted by the breeze, throughout the wood. Seeing all this, meseems this sylvan scene is the haunt of some god." Talking thus, they came to a tank, dejected at not finding the expected female bird. The air was eloquent with the hum of bees, feeding on liquid sweets from lotuses that bloomed on the breast of the tank. Viewing the scene, it appeared to Srimanta, as if all this were not new to him, as if he had seen the place before. Cogitating thus, he saw some pieces of red cloth, hanging from a Kadamva tree. On a stone at its bottom, were placed things necessary for ablution. At sight of these, the son of Dhana-pati recollected the word of the ascetic. He thereupon began to play on the flúte given by the holy sage. On hearing the sound, immediately the female bird descended from her perch, and sat on the shoulder of Srimanta. As the young man touched her with his hand for catching her, she fell to the ground, and lo! was converted into an exceedingly

beautiful and shining lady, with flowing locks, wearing wet clothes; and in this form she stood before the astonished youth. Srimanta gazed steadfastly for a while, like a statue. He then recognized her, and addressing her, "My love!" hugged her to his bosom. Rámnáth was the very image of wonder. "What's this!" exclaimed he. "Did Párvatí live as a bird, for some purpose, to resume her proper form now?" The fair one, reposing on the breast of her charmer, thought, "Even as Rati found new life on the bosom of her restored lord, so have I, on that of my own dear love." She bathed her beloved with tears. "My soul," said her lover, "your tears are withering my bosom,—pray, do you cool it with the ambrosia of your speech."

The damsel was delighted with this speech of her lover, but she could not speak from shame. "I beseech you," went on Srimanta, "do you forgive all my faults." The lady opened her lips, "Soul of my soul, I am ashamed because of the presence of your companion." Srimanta said, "Dear, he is no other than my sister's husband. His name is Rámnáth. He is my best friend. But for his infinite pains on my behalf, it would have been hard for me to regain you. As he is nearly connected with me, you should leave off shame in his presence." Learning this, Pramodá was glad. Then Srimanta asked her, "My love, why are your clothes wet?" "Honey," returned the fair one, "have you forgotten the past? I will remind you of it. We had our home here. Not

far from the forest, stands a beautiful brick-built mansion. We lived in it; and passed our days happily. We drank of the pure waters of this river—we sported in it. We knew no harm. Once, taking the necessary things, you came with me to bathe in this tank. You loosened my bound braid, and threw lotuses on my person, by way of dalliance. I drew you by main force, and splashed water and threw lotuses on your lovely person. Gradually we became lost to everything, save the consciousness of ecstasy in each other's embrace. At this point of time, came an ascetic stark naked, and stood on the bank, smiling at the sight of us. Suddenly my gaze fell on him. On seeing him, I hung down my head, and stood in the water mute and motionless. Seeing this alteration in my manner, you took my hand sadly and said, 'My dear love, of what fault have I been suddenly guilty, that you should be at once annoyed with me? If I have, pray, forgive me. Why has the eclipse of indignation darkened that moon of a countenance of yours. My mental light it darkens, dear. If you do not prove kind, I will die.' Touched at your plaintive appeal, I said bashfully, 'Lord, it is not displeasure that has changed me. Look at the cause. A shameless man stark naked, like any beast of the field or bird of the air, with a matted head of hair, is overlooking our sport and laughing. It is this which has made me hang down my head.' 'Where is that villain?' you exclaimed. 'Look there,' said I, 'he is standing there.' Seeing your wrath, and hearing

the abuse you applied to him, he shook all over, and roared out, 'Abandoned wretch! you have dared slight me. Die, slave, for this!' No sooner had this curse escaped his lips, than my lord shook like an aspen leaf and fell down dead. The sage then eyed me and said, 'Since you have compared me profanely to the beasts and the fowls, you shall live in the Sandal wood as a bird.' I fell down at his feet and implored mercy. He relented and said with a smile, 'My word will not go for nothing. You will live in this state for some time; after which you shall leave the feathered form, and regain a human shape.' I then rejoined, 'Sire, how shall I meet again with my lord?' 'Your dead lord,' returned the sage, 'shall regain you in his next life.' I then enquired, 'Vouchsafe to inform me where he will take his birth, and how I shall regain him.' The anchorit remarked, 'Your husband shall be born as the son of Dayásindhu, the spice-merchant of Magadha. After he has completed his eighteenth year, he shall hear your tidings from an ascetic, and come in search of you.' 'Sire,' said I, 'how, in his next life, shall I be able to recognise him? And what if I could? Although I shall regain my human form, still I shall then be old, my husband will be a young man. Further, on account of his change of life, the hearts of both of us will alter. And, even if he took me back, I should suffer blame, for communion with a man to whom I was not joined in holy wedlock. So that, holy sage, your blessing is

useless to me. I don't require your favor. Permit me to follow my lord. I don't wish to live.' At my lamentation, that best of ascetics said, 'Child, do not fear. Your husband shall appear before you in his present form, so that you will recognize him at once. When he comes to this forest, you shall sit on his shoulder; when he will touch you with his hand, you shall regain your present lovely form, and be blest in the enjoyment of your lord's company.' Saying this, he vanished. Lord, since then I have been living as a bird in this wood. I have been counting days. Through my good fortune, you have come here to-day and freed me from my feathered existence. I am now completely blest. But, love, let me ask of you one thing—What's the cause of your coming here? Did you remember the past?" "Beloved," replied Srimanta, "I have no other motive of coming here; it is only to regain you that I am here, after travelling many countries. I didn't remember an iota of the facts of my former life. I learned the facts relating to this Sandal wood from an ascetic, and have come here to regain you, and I have received you back." "Will you kindly satisfy my curiosity," asked the damsel, "by relating in detail what the ascetic told you?" Srimanta began, "A nude anchoret appeared before me and said, 'Ho youth, in former life you were the son of a wealthy Vaisya. Your name was Priyamvada. Your parents departed this life while you were yet a child. You were brought up by your ma-

ternal aunt, who educated you in various branches of learning, and married you to a girl, named Gandhinī. Gandhinī was not a very fair-looking girl, and was disliked by you. For this reason, after much search, your aunt married you for the second time to a girl named Pramodā. Having obtained Pramodā, you became exceedingly enamoured of her, and always remained at her side. One day, you went to sport in the waters with Pramodā, when a nude anchorēt came there; and being slighted by you, cursed you in wrath. In virtue of this curse, you met your end. Then you have taken your birth as the son of Dhana-pati.' After relating all this, he handed me a flute. He then added, 'Go to the Sandal wood, with this pipe. On hearing its notes, a female bird will alight on your shoulder. At the touch of your hand, she will leave off her bird-like form, and regain her own. You will thus regain your Pramodā.' Then the sage narrated what had befallen Gandhinī, and after this, vanished." Pramodā said, "My dearest love, if you do not feel weary, oblige me by detailing what befell Gandhinī." "I will," answered Srimanta, "tell you what I have heard from the hermit. When the ascetic I have told you of, had vanished, after having cursed us, Gandhinī came to the tank in search of us. On finding my dead body, and not finding you at all, she broke out into lamentations. Melted by her tears, the ascetic again appeared on the scene, and acquainted her with the calamity that had crushed us. Gandhinī fell at the feet of the hermit,

and supplicated, 'Sire, I am helpless. As I am an ugly thing, I have never been beloved of my lord. Whenever my lord had expressed his dissatisfaction with me, I have never taken it to heart. I was always engaged in serving my lord. I have never looked with dissatisfaction on anything which my lord held dear. Since I could distinguish right from wrong, I have never looked on any other man with impure thoughts. Lord, I am perpetually wretched; for what sin have you inflicted on me the terrible penalty of widowhood? I am not conscious of any transgression towards you; do you, lord, grant my prayer that I may regain my lord in this life; or else, I will hang myself outright; and you shall bear on your head the sin of having killed a woman.' The sage complacently said, 'With whatever prayer you will resign your life at the junction of the Ganges with the ocean, shall be granted you in next life.' On hearing this, the girl took farewell of the ascetic, and going to the place to which she was directed, prayed that in her next state of existence she might be a surpassingly beautiful woman, remembering her former life, that she might regain her late husband, and that she might gain his affections. Praying thus, she gave up the ghost. Gandhiní was born as the daughter of Vadra Sen Ráy, of Rámnagar. Her name is Naliní. Lately I have wedded her. All this I have learnt from the ascetic."

On hearing this relation, Pramodá dropped down to the ground in a trance. Srimanta took her up in his

lap and found that she was certainly dead. At this Srimanta began to cry. Rámnáth at once came up to him and asked, "Why do you weep, eh?" "Satisfy yourself as to the cause, with your own eyes," said his companion, "What shall I say?" Having heard the strange incidents, Rámnáth said, "Probably you have told her the history of Gandhiní. And her trance is owing to that." "Excuse me," cried Srimanta. "I see that my days are numbered here. You are my best of friends. Do you prepare without delay a funeral pyre. I will plunge into it and put a stop to all my miseries. Afterwards, go to my dear parents, and conveying my infinite reverence to their hallowed feet, say, 'Your Srimanta has bidden you an everlasting adieu, and has entered the funeral pyre.' Do you then console them. Let my dear sister be always at their side, so that their grief may be partially assuaged. Henceforth you are their only stay; pray see that they do not come to trouble. O God! is it to get this luckless wretch of a son that they fasted and prayed? I am a great sinner. It is for my sin in coming here without seeing them, that this has befallen me. O mother! O father! O my dear sister! I shall die without seeing you—I name you for the last time. Farewell!" Rámnáth's eyes filled with tears at the lamentations of his friend. Unable to contain himself, he said, "Forbear, my friend. It ill becomes you to put an end to your life, for a bird. If you die, don't think that I will ever return to our country. I will put a question to you. Do you

answer it and do what you like." "Pray, out with it," said Srimanta. "I have not long to live, my voice is being choked." Rámnáth rejoined, "When we were coming to this place, the husbandmen and the fishermen told us that those who went to the Sandal forest never returned. This is about to be verified now. Probably this fatal bird destroys incomers, sometimes as a tigress, at others as a woman, at others again, as a female bird. Whatever it be, it ill seems sensible men to abandon themselves to grief. Resigning all affection for the mother who has borne you for ten months in her womb, and for the father, who has brought you up with affection, you certainly deserve censure for this impatience. You should now return to your parents and make them happy." Srimanta fell down to the ground in a trance. Seeing this state of his friend, Rámnáth thought, "This is not so very bad, after all. At this opportunity, I will burn the body of this syren; and then, consoling Srimanta for what is past and buried, take him home to his house." Thinking thus, he prepared a pyre, and no sooner had he thrown the corpse in it, than Padmavatí, the maid of the goddess, Mahámáyá, who was passing by that place, and who had seen this action of Rámnáth, said, as a dreadful aerial voice, with great wrath and gnashing of teeth, "Villain, dost thou attempt to consume the body of the innocent Promodá, and thereby heap on thy head the crime of killing a woman? Dost thou not fear to commit this crime?" As Rámnáth went into a trance on hearing

this dread voice, Srimanta and Promodá sat up, like persons on awaking. Finding Promodá revived, her formerly disconsolate husband was ready to die for very joy. "Life of life," exclaimed he, "the sight of your moon-like countenance has brought life into my dead body." He was thus giving vent to his feelings, when he saw Rámnáth insensible on the ground, at some distance. Taking him to be dead, he said with tears in his eyes, "Friend of my bosom ! have you put an end to your existence, because I did not accept your word. If I happened to be guilty through ignorance, pray, do you forgive and answer me. Else I will make away with myself." Saying this, he took up a log of wood, and was going to strike it at his head, when Promodá snatched it away from him and cast it at a distance. Then Srimanta began to laugh, weep, dance, call Rámnáth aloud like a maniac. Seeing the plight of her husband, Promodá said, "O God ! dost thou not relent, even after afflicting this wretch of a woman in innumerable ways ? If it would be no better, it were far better for me to pass my days as a bird in this wilderness." She then took hold of Srimanta's hand and said in softly sweet accents, "Husband, if Rámnáth do not recover, it behoves us to resign our lives. But first let us offer up prayers to the Deity, for everything may be compassed through Divine grace. Let us bathe in this tank, and address ourselves to our devotions. If Rámnáth do not then recover, we will throw ourselves in this blazing pyre." Srimanta

consented and said, "My mother has got me by worshipping Kátyáyani. Let us worship even her. If my friend do not revive by this, we shall sacrifice ourselves in the pyre."

Then they made a clay image, and gathering wild flowers and blown lotuses, worshipped the goddess with them. Seeing all unavailing, they took rounds about the pyre, when, lo! a tottering old woman with a load of Sandal wood, supporting herself upon a staff, appeared before them, weeping loudly, and drawing near to Rámnáth, said, "I have left my home for a long time to go upon pilgrimages. I had my house here. Perhaps, it has been ruined for want of a protector. Where shall I shelter my head in this old age?" Then addressing Rámnáth, she said, "Who are you, fellow? Why do you obstruct my way by lying here? Have you no other place to lie down?" Saying this, as she struck the body of Rámnáth with her staff, lo! the young man sat up, and the old woman vanished. Having seen this marvel, Srimanta and Promodá said, "My Rámnáth, we were going to plunge into the pyre, taking you for lost, when an old woman, with loud wail, struck you with her staff. You have revived, and the old woman has vanished. Now, we should not tarry here a moment. We shall relate all, when we shall have removed ourselves to some other place." "For these days," replied Rámnáth, "we have not touched a morsel. Let me therefore procure some fruits from this forest. Remain here for some time." "Nay, you should not go alone," said

his friend, "let us all go together." Promodá said "Let us first slake our thirst by drinking of this tank, and then think of going elsewhere, in search of food." Then thy descended to the tank, and slaked their thirst, by drinking water, each with his or her joined palms. After this, as they were going through the forest, they saw a beautiful building. Promodá said, "There's our residence."

Rámnáth was curious to enter in, but Srimanta objected to it, saying, "We have met with many misfortunes here. No need of seeing anything here." But his friend was importunate. So they entered the place, and went up to the first and second floors, and feasted their eyes with seeing the richly furnished apartments. They took it to be the residence of some god, for such odour was impossible in any human residence. They saw a quantity of various fruits in one chamber, as also savoury dishes of diverse kinds, the plates, in number three, and engraved each with a name, being of gold. At sight of these dishes, they looked around to see any human beings; but none was to be found. With apprehension, Srimanta said, "Without doubt, this place belongs to some god. We shall come to grief, if we tarry here." "Lord," said Promodá, "seeing this strange sight, my mind is swelling with thoughts, which I fear to tell you. If you believe, I will tell. Formerly, when we lived here, your wife Gándhiní used to prepare such dishes for us, daily. Probably, the day on which the anchoret cursed us, the girl had prepared these dishes

for us, which have providentially remained in the same state. But "this idea is wild, and you need place no faith in it. But the sight of the plates engraved with names convinces me of it." Then they examined them, and said, "All is possible to the Divine agency. However, we should make all haste to leave this place." Thereupon, as they were preparing to leave the house, an ærial voice said, "Ho ! Where are you going, leaving ready food ? If you reject this, you will fare ill." Hearing this superhuman speech suddenly, they knew not what to do,—when, lo ! some person appeared before them, and said, "Friends, you need not fear: fall to." Then Śrīmanta said, "When repeated divine commands are heard, desiring us to eat, we should not hesitate." Then the three sat down to eat. When in the act of eating the wonderful dishes, it struck Śrīmanta that he had eaten such somewhere before. "Gāndhinī used to cook so," said Promodā. Having finished, they washed their hands and faces, and chewed betels. They then came to the tank in the house, and were talking of departure, when they perceived a light in the sky, and were alarmed. The light neared, and now they could clearly see a stately fiery figure in a golden car. Seeing this, all trembled from fear. The fiery form alighted, and taking hold of all the three, took them into his car. Then he soared with his car to the sky. Śrīmanta spoke to the person in fear, "Sir, harm us not. We throw ourselves on your mercy." "No fear," an-

swered the person. "All of you are dear to me. You needn't apprehend any danger from me." He then alighted at a golden palace, and entered in with his companions. The very touch of the ground filled Srimanta with delight; he thought that, perhaps, it was heaven itself; where else could such buildings be found? Then the blazing personage brought the three before the Gandarva, Puspa-danta, (flower-teeth), who was hearing music. Coming to him, he said, "My Lord, I have brought them from the Sandal forest; and they await your commands." Hearing this intelligence, the prince was excited, and said, "Where? Where is that youth? Hand him to me first." At this, Srimanta concluded that, it was no heaven, as he had falsely surmised; but Lanká, and that this man was its king. "He will eat me up, no doubt; otherwise, why should he be so eager to take hold of me, on hearing that we were come?" As the king extended his arms, the messenger handed Srimanta to him. The young man was terribly affrighted, and said with tears in his eyes, "O Lord of Rákshasas, pray do not devour me. I am the only son of my mother. I throw myself upon your mercy. I have not committed any wrong in your sight; save that we three had eaten the dishes that we found ready at the house in the Sandal forest. But that was not done by our own free will. The divine voice first enjoined us to eat, still we held out: the voice said a second time, 'If you neglect my word, you will fare ill.' We ate, in obedience to that

behest. If we have erred in that, I beseech you to forgive us for our unconscious offence." The king of Gandarvas laughed at the piteous appeal of Srimanta, and said, "Why do you weep from fear? You have not transgressed, neither is there any cause of fear. You think that I am a Rákshasa, and that I will eat you up. It is not so. My name is Puspadanta. I am your maternal grandfather. I have not seen you long, and it is for this reason, that I have brought you here. But do you first touch my eyes with your hand; then I shall tell you all." Then, as Srimanta touched the Gandarva's eyes with his hand, he received his sight, and eying the court around, and having rendered thanks to the Father of mercies, he took up the youth, and danced for joy. Then Srimantā, Rāmnāth and Promodā paid their obeisance to the feet of the Prince and asked his grace. The court said, on the restoration of the prince's sight, "We consider ourselves blest at the removal of the curse, and the restoration of Your Highness' sight." Then the king took his three guests into the inner apartment. The queen could not contain her joy at the happy event; and said in tones thrilling with emotion, "Your Majesty, my happiness knows no bounds on your cure, and I can expect no higher joy than I feel at the sight of my grandchild. Now, may it please Your Majesty to point me out the child of my Sukeshā." "Does not Your Majesty remember?" said the king. "Our Sukesha is a human being now; her name is Tāravatī. This is her son, Srimanta. This

girl, named Promodá is his wife, and this youth is the husband of Srimanta's sister." The king having explained this, they all three paid their reverence to the royal pair. The Queen stretched forth her arms, and embraced Srimanta. After pronouncing blessings on Promodá and Rámnáth, they enquired of the good news of Táravatí. Srimanta informed his grandmother in detail of all the circumstances, and said to the king, "Your Majesty, I belong to the human race. I am quite ignorant of the manners and customs of the Gandharvas. I don't know which word gives offence, and which not. If you forgive me, I will ask Your Majesty some questions." The king was pleased with the humility of the young man, and said "Child, you are always at liberty to speak out your mind without reserve. Pray don't fear to do so. Whatever you may have to ask, I will answer." Then Srimanta asked, "O lord of Gandharvas! you say that my mother is your daughter. Then why did you curse her? Why again were you blind? I am extremely curious to know all this. May it please your Majesty to satisfy my curiosity in detail on all these points."

"My child," returned the king, "your mother was borne by my queen, and went by the name of Sukeshá. She daily paid her devotions to Kátyáyani in the Vindya Mountains. Once, as she was going to worship, I called her on some business. She, however, went out without obeying me. This put me into a rage and I said, 'You have disobeyed my call. For this

offence, you shall take a human form.' Then Sukchá burst into tears and said, 'Father, it ill beseems a parent to punish his child more than is adequate. In virtue of your word, I shall have to be born among mortals. But do you confer this blessing on me, that the goddess Kátyáyani may be always propitious to me.' When Sukeshá thus prayed to me, I said, 'Be it so.' Then while I sat speechless in grief on account of my child, the ascetic, Garga, came in. On account of my absorption, I did not notice him. At this unconscious slight, the holy man flew into a rage, and exclaimed, 'O! hard-hearted Gandharva, you have cursed your unoffending daughter, and puffed up with the pride of wealth, has now slighted me, without deigning even to cast a glance at me! For this reason, you shall be struck blind.' At this terrible calamity, I rose up, and with fear and trembling threw myself down at the feet of the sage. At that time I could just see his feet. Afterwards losing sight of them, I took hold of the sage's feet and lamented loud. Seeing that I was disconsolate, the great man relented. He said, 'My word needs must take effect. But to console you, I will say this. When the daughter whom you have cursed will take her birth in the nether world, she shall bring forth a son, the touch of whose hand on your eyes will restore your divine sight.' Then in all humility I asked that best of sages 'O merciful sage! what personage will take his birth in the womb of my daughter; and how shall I come by him? Tell me this, holy sage.' 'You

will learn every thing,' replied the anchorite 'if you worship the god of gods, Mahádeva, for a year, in the Kailásha mountains.' Saying this, the sage vanished. Then I began my austerities in the Kailásha mountains. At the end of a year, the god of gods, with Nadikeshwar, appeared before me, and said, 'O king of Gandharvas ! I am pleased with your prayers. Do you ask for a boon.' 'Lord !' said I, 'if thou hast been pleased with thy servant, then first restore his sight.' Mahádeva said, 'The word of a Rishi is infallible. You shall afterwards receive your sight, according to his promise.' Then I asked, 'God, by virtue of my curse, my daughter, Sukeshá, is now a human being. What great man will take his birth in her womb, the touch of whom is to cure my blindness ? And how will he, being a human being, come to the world of the Gandharvas ? Vouchsafe to tell this to thy devotee ?' 'Lord of the Gandharvas,' replied the worshipper-loving God, 'Listen ! Once before this, in order to worship me, Kuvera brought flowers, garlands, Sandal-paste, and other articles necessary for worship, and went away to bring a quantity of Ganges water. In the meantime Ballika, the son of the Jaksha, Isu, came there strolling with his two wives. Seeing the fresh garlands, he took them up, and hung them on his own neck and those of his wives. On coming there, Nandikeshwar found that the articles of Kuvera had been desecrated ; and enraged at this, said, 'Impious wretches, as you have despoiled the articles set apart for worship, so you shall be born on earth.'

Then Ballika took hold of Nandikeshwara's feet, and wept. Nandikeswar said, 'You shall regain your native seat at the Gandharva heaven, after two births.' So the cursed souls were reduced to ashes. That Jakhya is now the son of a merchant in Uddīpanī, named Chitrasena. His present name is Prīyamvada, and his two wives were born in the family of another merchant, and have become his partners. The way in which Prīyamvada, taking his birth in the womb of your daughter, will cure you of blindness, Nandikeshwar will reveal to you." Therefore, my child, through the grace of Nandikeshwar, I was kept informed of all that had befallen you. Then when you were cursed at Uddīpanī, I gave you the supremacy of the Saṇḍal forest and all that pertained thereto.' All the things that you have seen there, belong to you. I have brought you here for my own sake."

All the circumstances that Srimanta had heard of from the ascetic, pertaining to the Sandal-wood, were detailed anew by the king of Gandharvas. Having heard all this, Srimantā began to hymn his grandfather. Being pleased with his humility and reverence, the king said, "My child, after so long, to-day has seen my troubles crowned with success. Now, whatever blessings you will ask at my hands, I will give you." Whatever blessings Srimanta asked were rendered him. Then he enquired, "Your Majesty, I was formerly the son of a Jakhya ;—I am greatly curious to see my former parents. If you will, you can make

me see them." In accordance with this request of his grandson, the king ordered a servant to call in the Jakha, Isu. The man immediately brought him in. On coming before the throne, Isu asked, "May it please Your Majesty to tell me why you have called me." Then pointing to Srimanta, the king said, "O Jaksha, do you recognise this gentleman?" "No, Your Majesty," replied the person, "I can't." Then the king of Gandharvas explained the relation between the two. Srimanta bowed down his head at the feet of his Jakhya father, and took the dust of his feet. The Jakhya took Srimanta in his lap, kissed and smelled his son's crown, and enquired for his good news. "My son, where are my two daughters-in-law now?" Srimanta hung down his head and answered, "Father, of my two wives, this lady is called Pramodá. She is my second wife; my first wife is at home." Then Pramodá worshipped the feet of her father-in-law, and related all the circumstances of her life. All rejoiced. Afterwards, Srimanta said to the king of the Gandharvas, in all humility, "I consider myself blest in seeing you, Sir. Now I am extremely anxious to see my mother. May it please Your Majesty to fulfil my wish." "Ho Jaksha," said His Majesty, "take Srimanta to your home, and satisfy him." Hearing this, the Jaksha said, "I will, Sire. I was only waiting for Your Majesty's command. Let me then take Srimanta with me." He thereupon took all three, and calling in his wife, said, "The son for whom you always weep, and who has gone to the

nether world for the curse of Nandikeswar, is now before you." At this, the Jakshinī grew mad for joy, and seeing two men and a woman said, "Lord, which of the two is my Ballika?" The Jaksha said, "This is your Ballika. He has received a human shape, and is called Srimanta. The other young man is Srimanta's brother-in-law. The lady you see is the younger wife of your son. The elder is at her house." When the Jaksha had given this information, they all three paid their reverence at the feet of the lady. She took Srimanta in her lap, kissed him and asked, "O son, how do you fare in your human form?" Srimanta related every thing in detail. Then the Jakshinī said, "O son, do you once call me mother, and suck at my breast. I will confer this blessing on you. When you shall be hungry, on remembering me, your stomach shall be filled with mother's milk; and you shall get such an accession of strength that the most laborious work will not fatigue you. You shall be always victorious in war. You shall never grow old. Further I will give you a ring. In virtue of this, whatever you desire, you will have. In short, you will be equal to the gods in power. If anybody shall steal this ring, he will not be able to keep it; it will return to your finger. I will further tell you this. She in whose womb you have taken your birth, was formerly the daughter of a Gandharva. I used to worship Kātyāyanī with her in the Vindya mountains. For some cause she is now a mortal." Then Srimanta said with clasped hands, "Mother, tell me how you have

obtained the ring you have favoured me with.”

“List, my child,” said the dama. “In days of yore, at the churning of the Ocean, when rose Laksmí from the milky deep Ocean, presented the dámsel to Náráyana, and offered this ring to him as dower. Náráyana gladly wore it on his finger. Afterwards, as he was worshipping the god of gods, with ten millions of lotuses, in order to test the reverence of his worshipper, Mahádeva stole away a lotus. Knowing this, Náráyana plucked out the eye that graced his forehead, and offered it to the feet of the god. The god was pleased, and gave him a lotus eye instead. Since then Hari goes by the name of the ‘Lotus-eyed.’ Náráyana also offered this ring at the feet of Mahádeva. At this, the great god conferred the wished-for blessing and vanished. Then the lord of Umá gave this ring to his spouse. When Bhagabatí was preparing to go to her father, Dakha’s ceremony, my father Kuvera decked out the damsel in jewels and gold, and among other ornaments, put this ring on her finger. My father gave it to me as my dower. Now I give it to you as a token of affection.”

Hearing this strange adventure of the ring, Srimanta was proud in possessing it; and said to his mother, with clasped hands, “Mother, I have a wish. If you permit, I will disclose it to you.”

“A son,” replied the mother, “can demand anything of his mother. If the thing lie in my power, you shall have it, child.”

Then Srimanta said, “Mother, I am extremely anxious to see your father.”

“My child,” returned

the dame, "my father was angry with you. Therefore I cannot take you before him without knowing his mind. First, I shall acquaint him with your intention; then as he says, we shall do. Therefore stay here a little," She then went to Kuvera, and having gained his permission, brought Srimanta before him. Srimanta paid his reverence at the feet of his grandfather, and stood before him with clasped hands. Kuvera asked his daughter, "My child, is this your son, Ballika?" "Yes, Sire," returned the daughter. "He is my son." Then the king of Jakshas embraced Srimanta, and having enquired of his good news, said, "O child, I was in grief for your curse. To-day the sight of you makes up for all that. The blessings which have been showered upon you by the king of Gandharvas, and more especially the ring given to you by your mother, have well compensated your troubles; so that, although a mortal, you are equal to us in power." "Sire," replied the youth, "in your satisfaction is my best reward. Now I wish to wash off my sins, by seeing Nandikeshwar." Then the king of Jakshas appeared before Nandikeshwar with Srimanta, and after paying his reverence to the god, began to pray to him. Nandikeshwar was pleased with his devotee's prayer, and said, "Srimanta, you are blest. In your next life, you shall see Mahádeva." In the meantime, the ascetic, who formerly had appeared before Srimanta, came in with a smile. "What! Srimanta," said he, "do you know me?" Srimanta bowed at the feet of the sage, and

said, "Sire, I have all my desires through your grace; nay, being a human being, I have seen heaven itself. What more can I expect?" Then the lord of Jakshas took farewell of Nandikeshwar, and returning to his own house with Srimanta, presented a loadstone to his grandson. "Your treasury," he said, "will always be full by the charm of this gem." In the meantime a messenger had come. He said, "Sirs, the king of Gandharvas is expecting your return. Pray, do not delay any more. Come there at once." Hearing this, the Jakshini took her daughter-in-law in her lap, with tearful eyes, and blessed her, "My child, may you enjoy the perpetual spring of youth and be loved by your husband!" Then Srimanta, Rámnáth and Promodá bowed at the feet of the Jaksha couple, and asked their permission to go. The prince of Jakshas loaded them with presents, and they took their farewell. Then, on arriving at the house of the Gandharva king, Srimanta related all that had happened. The king said, "Srimanta, you have never seen a Gandharva court. To-day a court is to be held; come and see." Saying this, he took Srimanta and Rámnáth and came to the court. As they entered, the guests rose up, and welcomed them with every mark of respect. The king sat on his throne. Srimanta and Rámnáth sat on his left, on lower seats. The guests sat on their respective seats. Seeing the wonder of the company in seeing two human beings, the king, addressing the multitude, said, "Ethereal virtues! Of

these two, this is my maternal grandchild. He was formerly a Jaksha, named Ballika. He has taken this form, by the curse of Nandikeshwar. He is no man. His touch has cured my blindness. It is to entertain him that we are assembled here." Hearing this, the guests were exceedingly glad. Then began music. Seeing and hearing things and sounds not seen by human eyes or heard by human ears, Srimanta and Rámnáth thought, "Is this divine enchantment or a glorious dream?" They wondered at it every moment. Then the meeting broke, and each wended to his own place.

The king of Gandharvas with Srimanta and Rámnáth, returned to his quarters, and they rested for the night. While asleep, Srimanta dreamed a dream, the purport of which was, that his mother Táravatí, disconsolate for her son, was going into trances frequently. Seeing this, Srimanta cried from excess of grief. It awakened the people: They rushed in and saw that the youth was crying. The king of the Gandharvas took him into his lap, and with words of encouragement, asked, "Child, pray, why are you weeping?" Encouraged by the words of his grandfather, he told him of his dream. The king then said, "What fear for that? You shall go to your home this very night. Soothe yourself. I am going to make the arrangements." Pacifying him thus, the king went out.

On the other hand, Padmavatí was painting another dream on Táravatí's mind. She dreamed that a

Brahminí, who had her husband, came to her and said, "Táravati, up! Your Srimanta is coming with his bride, accompanied with Rámnáth. Do you prepare the things necessary for receiving the pair auspiciously." Táravati started up in surprise, and related her dream to Dhanapati, whose joy knew no bounds. He immediately called his officers, and said, "Do you prepare the articles for worship, clean the temple, unfurl the flags, place pitchers with mango leaves, at intervals, and plantain trunks on each side." On receiving this order, the officers went about carrying it out. The women were engaged in procuring articles for auspicious rites. Then they, with the Brahmin ladies, remained gazing at the direction from which Srimanta was expected to come. The joy of Ketakí and Naliní was boundless;—every one knows the happiness that results from meeting with one we love. Ketakí said, "To-day we shall see the new bride." "Yes, my girl," said Naliní, "for a long time we have not seen our Prámódá." "Were you," replied Ketakí, "acquainted with her formerly; else how could you know her name to be Prámódá?" Naliní said with a smile, "I shall say nothing now; you will know all afterwards." From this, Ketakí could not know whether her companion's word was true or otherwise.

On the other hand, the king of the Gandharvas came to Srimanta and said, "All things are in readiness for your departure. Now, learn a bit of Gandharva lore." He then imparted some incantations to his grandchild. At this juncture, the Jakhya,

Isu, appeared with his wife, and affectionately taught his son many things. Then Srimanta bowed to the ground before the king of Gandharvas and that of Jakshas, and, after paying his reverence to his grandmother and mother, took farewell. The Gandharva king directed his retainers to conduct the three safely. Thereupon they told them to sit on a stone and close their eyes. "When we shall tell you to re-open your eyes, open them." When the three sat on the stone, the servants took the stone on their heads, and began their aerial journey. By order of the Jaksha king, fourteen jewelled barks stood ready in the king's harbour. The servants of the Gandharva placed the three on board one of the barks, and said, "Pray, re-open your eyes. You have arrived in your country." Then they did as they were asked, and saw that they were actually in their own country. At this they marvelled greatly. "How could we come here in a twinkling?" said Srimanta. "A little before this, we were on the heads of the servants. Wherefrom is this bark! We never came by the sea! How could all this befall?" Reading his thoughts, the men, with clasped hands, said, "All these jewelled barks have been presented to you by the Jaksha prince. They are yours." "This is true," said the servants of the Gandharva. "It is for this that we have placed you here." Hearing this, Srimanta thought, "Should the fame of all this wealth reach the ears of our king, he will surely not be able to resist the temptation. So let me call the king of Gandharvas." Upon this, he recited the

Gandharva incantations. "Appear, O king! appear
 eftsoons;—I burn to see you for the nonce."

• Anon the Gandharva appeared and asked Srimanta,
 "Why have you remembered me in so short a time?
 Tell me. If you are in danger, I will arrest it in no
 time." Srimanta said, "Lord, the riches wherewith
 you have graciously enriched me are unattainable
 on earth. Our king may appropriate them by force.
 It is from this fear that I have called you." "Child,"
 replied the Gandharva, "in virtue of your Gandharva
 lore, you can conquer the three worlds,—you know
 every illusion. I am always by you, on remembrance;
 so that there breathes not a soul in all the three
 worlds who can defeat or injure you. No fear.
 Now it behoves you to see all the riches that the
 Jaksha king and I have given you." Thereupon,
 the king showed him all the wealth, and related
 the virtues of every article. He then said, "It
 is about daybreak. See! see! the hare-spotted
 luminary is about to bid adieu; the sages are on
 their way to the river-side; the sun is advancing,
 swallowing the ocean of darkness, like Agastya
 of yore. The birds are leaving their nests, and
 with sweet notes are going in different direc-
 tions." Saying this, the king vanished. When the
 day broke, the officers of the Gandharva fired guns.
 Hearing the reports, the keeper of the prince's har-
 bour came, and enquired, "Wherefrom are you?
 Don't you know that nobody can come in without
 the permission of our prince? When you have

dared fire guns and beat drums, you must be a hostile party. But see, yonder are fifteen ships furnished with guns. If you wish to live, fly away; else prepare to give battle. If you come for commerce, you should first obtain a letter patent from His Majesty, or else we shall not allow you to put your vessels in harbour. If you should belong to this country, let us know who you are, for your good." "Friends," replied Srimanta, "we are no foes, or foreign merchants. I am the son of the Srestí, Dhanapati. My name is Srimanta. I went for commerce. Now I have returned to my country. Do you convey intelligence of this to my father." On this the guards ran off to Dhanapati and reported the matter to him. Hearing this, Dhanapati, accompanied with his friends and priests, came to the shore. Seeing him, Srimanta and Rámnáth both alighted on shore, and paid their reverence to him. "O father," exclaimed Srimanta, "I am your worthless son. You have suffered greatly on my account. Do you forgive my transgressions?" Then Dayásindhu took Srimanta in his lap and consoled him with affectionate words. He then consoled Rámnáth, and seeing the many wonderful things that they had brought, said, "Far from seeing these things, my boy, I have not even heard their names." Some stood like statues at sight of the articles. Some said, "Srimanta is no common man, and why should not this be so? He who is blest by the goddess Mshámáyá can compass everything." All said,

“Let us all pray that Srimanta and Rámnáth may live long; and that they may revere Mahámáyá always. Then Dayásindhu placed her daughter-in-law in a litter, and went home. .

Táravatí, Ketakí and Naliní were expecting the entrance of Srimanta in the hall of Chándí, when Dayásindhu entered with his son, new daughter-in-law and son-in-law, and they all paid their reverence to the goddess. When Srimanta and Rámnáth bowed at the feet of Táravatí, she, with tearful eyes, took her son in her lap, smelled his head, kissed him, and enquired for his good news. She then entered her house with her new daughter-in-law. All the citizens were loud in their praises of Táravatí's fortune. Then she performed the *Stri-áchára* ceremony, as observed by her class. She then addressed her son, thus, “O son, I am blest with you. Pray do you eat a little now.” When Srimanta had eaten, he sat by his mother and related his adventures. After listening him out, his mother said, “My Srimanta, how do I wish to see my father, the king of Gandharvas now! If you can make me see him, I then attain my desire.” “Very well, mother,” answered Srimanta, “you will see the prince tomorrow night.” On the other hand, Ketakí was talking with her two sisters-in-law. Naliní said to Pramodá, “Sister, I cannot express my joy on seeing your moon-like face, after many a day.” Then Pramodá laid the hanging end of her cloth around her neck, and bowing to the ground said, with tears, “Do

you recognise me ?” “Sister,” replied Pramodá, “I am your servant for ever and a day. I have always thought on your feet. But owing to the malice of Fortune, you came by griefs for a time at my hands. Pray, excuse the past and smile on me.” “The fortunes of both of us,” rejoined Naliní, “are equal. How are you to blame ? I have reaped but what Fortune had decreed. But tell me, tell me, how you have regained your husband.” Then Pramodá began, “In virtue of the sage’s curse, I lived a bird at the place, for the length of eighteen years. The day after that on which the curse had ended, our husband appeared at the place, and delivered me. The spot now goes by the name of the ‘Sandal-forest, and is desolate now. But what is the wonder, the dishes you had prepared for us, had not been spoiled, but were fresh till that day. We fed on them. All this speaks of your greatness.” She then narrated the incidents at the world of Gandharvas, and asked Naliní for a description of the way in which she had regained her husband. Naliní said, “Listen ! When you had been changed into a bird, I appeared on the spot, and found our love a corpse. A person irradiating with fiery lustre, stood there. I took hold of the feet of the sage, and began to wail, when he related all that had befallen you two. He then said, ‘Child, do not grieve more. You also are a virtuous girl. You shall regain your husband.’ I then asked him, ‘Lord, by what means shall I regain my lost lord ?’ Thereupon that best of ascetics said, ‘With whatever desire you

will resign your life at the junction of the Ganges with the ocean, shall be attained.' Accordingly I went to the place, and with the desire of regaining my husband, resigned my life ; and having been born as the daughter of Vakra Sen, have regained our lord."

The girls were talking thus, when Srimanta entered and greeted them. They were thus engaged in sweet converse, when a maid-servant entered and said, "Sir, a messenger from the prince is at our place. The governor desires your presence." Hearing this, Srimanta went to Dhanapati, who said, "My son, the prince desires to see you ; do you therefore go to the Presence with Rám. Present His Highness with whatever jewels you like." Having bowed at his father's feet, Srimanta took some precious jewels, and went to the king with Rámnáth. When they came to the gate, a warder went to the Presence, with this news. The king gave his permission for the entrance of the comers. The warder brought Srimanta and Rámnáth before the king. The king was on his throne, his unmarried daughter at his side ; the officers were engaged in work. The king was struck with the beauty of Srimanta, and blessed God, for the delight at seeing a youth so transcendantly beautiful. "If he were of royal blood," thought he, "I would have married him to my lovely lily of a daughter." The courtiers were also affected ; the daughter of the king gazed at Srimanta steadfastly. Seeing this, her maid-servant took her away into the inner apartment. Then when the king asked him to sit down, Srimanta

sat and began to talk with the king. When Srimanta presented him the jewels, he thought, "Such gems are not to be found ever in my treasury. I will ask him, how he has come by these. Well, Srimanta," said he, addressing the youth, "tell me how you have come by such a priceless treasure?" Hearing this, Srimanta thought within himself, "Concealing the actual truth, I should tell the king that I have got them through superhuman agency." Thereupon he began, "May it please Your Highness, I went from Dravira to the Punjab for the purpose of commerce, and stayed there for three months. When I had acquired a sum of money there, I went to Ceylon. I prospered there, and at last embarked for home. On the fourth day of our voyage, the evening brought with it such a violent tempest, that the sailors were unable to save the ship. I was terribly frightened. Seeing no other means of saving my life, I tied together some gourds with a rope, and resigning myself to the mercy of Heaven, plunged into the boisterous deep. Your Majesty, the recollection of that day still fills me with fear. I can't say whether the ship weathered it or not. I went on floating, but could not say whither. The next day, about noon, I descried a sandy island. I went in that direction and reached land. But I could not walk from fatigue. For preserving myself, I fell on the ground on my knees. When I had dried in the sun, I looked around and found a child. 'How,' thought I, 'could this child come here. Perhaps, it has met with a like calamity with myself.' I came

up to the child, and found that he was digging the ground and taking up heaps of gems. When I neared, he said with a smile, 'Do you once take me in your lap.' My lord, the sweet music of his lips made my heart glad. Anon, I took him up, when lo! all my bodily and mental uneasiness vanished. Then I asked him, 'Little thing! how came you to live here alone? Where are your parents?' He smiled and said, 'My parents are under these waters. I am digging up these gems for you. Do you take these away to your father and mother.' I again asked the boy, 'Do you once call your parents; I wish to see them.' 'My father,' said the child, 'lives sometimes in water, sometimes within the earth, at others in the air. See! See! My father is sailing through the air!' Saying this, he played with the dust, and taking out a fruit, gave it to me to eat. I gave half of it to the boy, who began to eat it with relish. I ate the other half, and it seemed to me as if I had eaten nectar. This world furnishes nothing like that sensation. Now the sun was sinking down to the west. The moon rose and spread his silver net.* At sight of this the boy was filled with glee, and began to play. When the noon of night had gone by, the boy told me, 'Look, your ships are coming.' I looked, and saw some ships. I took them to be some merchantmen, belonging to others. 'I am entirely at the mercy of God; if these men come in this direction, they will take pity upon me and take me into a ship.'

* * The moon is a male in the Sanskrit literature.

I was thinking thus, when the boy said, 'What you are thinking is not the case. These are your own ships. At daybreak, you will go in and away to your home.' At morning, the ships landed. Now I saw that these were actually my ships. When the mariners saw me, they said, 'Sir, ever since you had leaped into the ocean, we had been searching you. Pray, get in.' Then when I asked farewell of the boy, he said, 'Do you fill your ships with the gems that I have collected.' In accordance with this, I ordered the sailors to do so, and they did it. Then when the boy entered the ship with me, the ships sailed. Both of us lay down on a bed, and when we felt inclined to sleep, the ships landed at your Majesty's harbour. The sailors sounded the *drum*, and we woke up. Seeing all these strange things, I was going to hymn the boy, when he said, 'Do you protect your fourteen ships. I go to my own place. Whenever any danger impend over you, I shall protect you.' Saying this, he vanished. As I was wailing his loss, the policemen of Your Majesty came to me and enquired of my name and lineage. Having furnished them with the information, I went home. Then as I was about to set out to see Your Majesty, in came Your Majesty's envoy. 'Father desired me to come to the Presence at once. I consider myself blest with the sight of Your Majesty. Having heard Srimanta out, the king eyed his minister askance, and said to Srimanta, 'Now you may go. We shall see you again at another time.'"

Seeing the delay of Srimanta in returning from the palace, both Naliní and Pramodá became anxious. On the other hand, when Srimanta had taken his departure, the king said to his minister, "The story of the merchant's son strikes me as untrue. He may have gained the gems from various countries; and from fear lest others should know of it, he has accounted for his acquisition by calling in the aid of supernatural events. However, my merchant is richer than those of other princes, every way." Then the minister said, with clasped hands, "Sire, I have not yet said anything from fear. Now I will deliver my mind." "Tell me," replied the king, "in detail." "Your Majesty," said the minister, "I am sure, the merchant's son is very cunning. He went to an island, as a trader, and having murdered the king, has appropriated all this wealth." "Nay, this doesn't stand to reason," replied the prince. "For had he done so, should none have heard of it? Would the king live alone? Would he not be attended by guards and chamberlains? Having regard to this immense wealth, the king should be possessed of great influence; and herein your opinion is falsified. But let me know your motive; whatever be the means whereby Srimanta has acquired this wealth!" "Sire," answered the minister, "All that Your Majesty says is true. But vouchsafe to lend your ear to what I say. Mansingha, Prince of Sindhu, was a powerful, famous, kind-hearted and merciful prince. He was always intent on increasing the happiness of

his subjects. He did not even at intervals realise taxes from his people. For this, many became immensely rich in his dominions. There lived in his kingdom a man named Bhima Singha, who had acquired immense wealth, but who, notwithstanding, passed his days like a poor man. He had a son named Bejoy, who, from his childhood, had showed a superior intelligence and physical prowess. Once the boy went to his father and said, 'Father, to-day, I wish to see the prince ; but I can't go without your permission.' Bhima Singha said, 'Why do you wish to see the prince, boy ?' 'Without being known to the king,' replied the youth, 'a man has slender chance of increasing his wealth or fame.' 'Go, then,' said the father. Thinking that it was improper to go to the Presence, without presents, Bhima Singha prepared and gave him some. Then the youth said, 'Sire, pray give me some presents more ; for if I do not please the minister first, he may speak evil of me to his master. But if I tie his tongue down by a golden chain, he will be a friend to me.' Hearing this, the father internally praised the good sense of his son, and adopted his suggestion. Accordingly he prepared other presents and sent his son with the things, with his servants and retainers. Bejoy arrived at the capital with his men, and after having secured his lodgings, and bathed and taken his meal, he saw the minister, and giving him the presents, expressed his wish to see His Majesty. 'To-morrow morning,' said the minister, pleased, 'I will take you to the

court. I will introduce you to His Majesty; and if you have any suit, I will assist you in the matter.' 'Sir,' replied Bejoy, 'I depend entirely on you. Do you, Sir, make me acquainted with the prince.' He returned to his quarters, and having passed the night there, next day went to the Presence with the minister. After having bowed and offered the presents, he stood before the prince, when the minister began to give all the necessary information of the youth to the prince. 'May it please Your Majesty,' began the officer, 'Bhim Singha, a subject of Your Majesty, is very rich. This youth is his son. His name is Bejoy Singha. He is proficient in many branches of learning. Now he has come to pay his homage to Your Majesty.' Having been informed thus, the king examined the features and demeanour of Bejoy, and told him to sit. When he had sat, the king asked, 'Have you any suit? You may have your desire, if you express it.' Then, with clasped hands, Bejoy said, 'Sire, there are certain villages adjacent to the house of your servant. If it please Your Majesty to lease them to me, on condition of my paying a rent, Your Majesty will confer a boon on your servant.' 'You shall,' answered the prince, 'get the villages.' Then he told his minister to draw the lease, which being done, the minister had it signed by the king, and delivered it to Bejoy. Then Bejoy took farewell of the king, and having reached home, told everything to his parents, who were glad. Henceforth, Bejoy began to rule

these villages, and paid the due annually. The clever Bejoy increased his wealth and attained influence over his subjects. Then he began to collect troops. When, in a short time, he had levied a force of twenty thousand men, Bejoy thought, 'Now I can obtain possession of the kingdom of Sindhu, for the king numbers only sixteen thousand troops; so that my force is superior to the royal army. Further, I am a strategist; so that in no respect is the king my equal. Should the king conclude peace, and give me half his kingdom, good and well; otherwise, I will beat him and take possession of the whole.' With this determination, he sent an ambassador to the prince. The man appeared before the prince, and after having paid his respects, began, as directed by his master, 'Bejoy Singha has sent me to Your Majesty. Sire, if you give half your territory to Bejoy Singha, and conclude peace, it will be well; else twenty thousand men, armed *cap-à-pie*, will fight against you desperately. Your Majesty may adopt the course you think best.' At intelligence of this, the king flamed with anger, and said, 'What! Being a jackal, Bejoy wishes to be a lion! For this, he shall have his reward ere long. Do you tell him to prepare for war. I will send him to hell, without delay.' When the messenger had left the place, the king ordered out his sixteen thousand, and marched.

On the other hand, Bejoy, hearing of the royal preparations from the envoy, stood ready with his army. Then the two belligerents met and began a

dreadful conflict. When the fight had continued for a week, Bejoy Singha lost three thousand men; of the royal forces, some were wounded, some took to flight. Seeing the hopeless state of his fortunes, the ruler of Sinde, with his sword and buckler, began a single combat with Bejoy. Both fought skilfully; at length the king of Sinde became enfeebled. 'Your Majesty,' exclaimed Bejoy, 'you would not have been reduced to this pass, had you concluded a treaty then. Now it is for your good to render submission, unless you will lose your throne.' The king could return no reply from shame. 'Your Majesty,' again rejoined Bejoy Singha, 'I will show consideration by consenting to take one-half of your kingdom;—you may pass your days with the rest. But you must promise, that if any rebellion should break out in my dominions or should I be attacked by a foreign enemy, you would assist me. Conclude such a peace, and return to your capital.' The king concluded a peace to this effect, and returned to his home. From this, Sire, it is evident that it is extremely impolitic for a prince to allow any of his subjects to grow wealthy. I advise Your Majesty to secure the fourteen ships of the young man. Pray don't regard the merchant's soft lightly. From his appearance and intelligence, I have entertained shrewd doubts."

"Yes," replied the king; "I should try to secure all his wealth." "Your Majesty," replied the minister, "unless you imprison Srimanta, you can by no means secure the wealth in the ships. Should he

come there, he will render material obstruction by his intelligence and wealth;—so that, if Your Majesty permit, we will imprison him.” The king consenting, the minister sent a man to bring back Srimanta. The man came to Srimanta in hot haste, and said, “Sir, the minister calls you on some urgent business. Pray, come there instantly.” At this, the young man thought, “I have just reached the end of the palace, after taking farewell of the king and minister; so that this call startles me. The minister must entertain some evil designs. But I have no fear, by the blessings of the Gandharva king.” Thinking this, he went with the envoy. When Srimanta and Rāmnāth entered the hall, the wicked minister, who was expecting them every moment, made a sign to the warder, who arrested the young man, and took them to prison. At this Srimanta laughed. Then the minister sent a message to the king, saying, “If Your Majesty permit, I will go myself and bring the jewels.” Having obtained the king’s permission, as the minister was going towards the ships, he thought, “I will first despatch all the most precious gems to my house. By this, I shall be more wealthy than the king.”

On the other hand, Srimanta said to Rāmnāth in prison, “The king’s thoughts are evil; since he wishes to appropriate all my wealth, by imprisoning me. Now let me remember the king of Gandharvas.” Srimanta remembered the Gandharva Prince, who instantly appeared and asked, “Child! Why have you

remembered me?" "Lord," answered Srimanta, "desiring to appropriate all the gems bestowed on me by Your Majesty, the king has imprisoned us, through the machinations of his wicked minister. It is for this reason that I have remembered you." "What is impossible to the gods," answered the king, "can never be possible to men. Now go home; I will adequately punish the king." According to the injunction of the Gandharva Prince, Srimanta and Rāmnāth went home invisibly. The retainers of the Gandharva Prince (having received the necessary orders) immediately paralysed the hands and feet of the minister, and destroyed the motion of the guards; and they began to rain flesh and blood all round. They set up dreadful yells, and wearing frightful forms and dealing blows and slaps, disappeared like lightning. They caused instant stars to shoot in the city, and this frightened the people greatly. Seeing all these wonderful appearances, the king, trembling, called a council. He said, "All this is owing to my having imprisoned the merchant's son. Now if we release him, we can escape these dangers." Deciding this, they went to the prison and saw that the minister lay senseless on the floor—he only retained his power of speech. On seeing the king, the minister burst out into tears and said, "Your Majesty, the son of Sādhu is no common man. For as soon as I had imprisoned the captives, they vanished, I know not where. My hands and feet are benumbed. Your Majesty, I have lost the power to get up. This

is the fruit of my machinations." "Whatever it be," replied the king, "let us now ascertain the means of deliverance." They then concluded, "It is nothing else than divine agency ;—we should therefore ask for forgiveness of our transgressions." They thereupon fell to praying to the gods. After a while, a divine voice said, "Thou hard-hearted villain—thou worst of monarchs ! Thou imprisonedest the innocent son of Sádhu. It is for this sin that I have reduced thee to this plight. If thou canst install Srimanta as thy heir to the throne, and give him thy daughter in marriage, then only wilt thou find mercy ; else thou art doomed." Hearing this, the king tremblingly said, "I bow to the divine behest ; I will do as I am bid." As soon as the king had spoken thus, the servants of the Gandharva desisted from committing any further havoc. Then the king sat at court with his minister, and decided "to send an envoy to Dhanapati ; and that should he decline, the king should go there in person."

On the other hand, the king of Gandharvas, having inflicted punishment on the king, appeared before Srimanta and said, "My child, I have punished your enemies. Now the King will give you his daughter in marriage and install you as his heir in the kingdom ; for which an envoy is coming here. He will request you to go to the palace. If you decline to go, the king will himself come here. You should not therefore go with the envoy." "Lord," returned Srimanta, "I shall have my desire, if a palace be built with a

forts at the extremity of the city." "Be it so," said the royal Gandharva, and calling Vishwakarmá, he issued orders for building the house, and then departed. The divine architect in a single night completed a palace with seven apartments, surrounded with a moat containing vessels upon the waters. The canal opened through sluices into the ocean, so that the supply of water would never fail. Valuable gems were set on the silver and golden walls, and the rooms were all the brighter for them. On the highways, he built brick houses, to serve for lighting the roads. When the palace had been built, Srimanta took the permission of the king of Gandharvas, and with his parents, friends and acquaintances, began to live in it.

On the other hand, the king having consulted with his ministers, wrote a letter and despatched with it a wise courtier to Dhanapati. The ambassador came to the gate of Dhanapati and sent the news by a warder. Dhanapati and Srimanta agreed to see the ambassador, and told the man to shew him in. The man went; and after having passed through the seven apartments, brought the envoy to Dhanapati. The envoy paid his respects to Dhanapati, who received him kindly. He then enquired for the good news of the king, and asked to know the occasion of the visit. The envoy thereupon handed the king's letter to Dhanapati, who read as follows :—

"I wish to bind my dearest child,
In wedlock with thy boy ;—
My name to save, if thou dost come,
My mind will swim in joy.

Thro' force of Fate, I did thee wrong ;
What's past is past for e'er ;—
Thy suppliant I,—forgive me, pray,
And up thy spirits cheer.

What pang was mine, when I thy boy
Kept fast in 'durance vile !"
Come here, Good Sir, with Srimanta,
To make my darling smile."

After reading the letter, Dhanapati remained silent ;— at which the ambassador thought, " Perhaps, he has got angry with me and is silent." " I am infinitely obliged by His Majesty's letter," began Dhanapati, " since he has wished to give his daughter in marriage to my boy. But I can't believe it ; for His Majesty can't do anything without the consent of his minister, since His Majesty imprisoned my innocent son by the advice of his minister. So that I think if we, father and son, go there, the king can easily take our lives. From this fear, I do not venture to go to the king, who is advised by so wicked a minister." Hearing the speech of Dhanapati, the royal envoy said with clasped hands, " Sir, whatever you have said is true. His Majesty imprisoned your son by the advice of the minister. For this he suffered great troubles ; and prayed to the gods for deliverance. At last, a divine voice said, ' All this has befallen thee for having imprisoned the innocent son of Sádhu. If thou canst marry thy daughter to Srimanta, and install him thy heir, then only will

thy troubles cease; else thy destruction is probably at hand. The minister has been put in chains for life.' Agreeing to this, His Majesty has sent me to you, gentle Sir. May it please you to go to the palace with your son, and thus save the empire. You may destroy the kingdom if you like, because your son, Srimanta, is no common man. He is a very god; he is ranging the earth in a human form." When the courtier had ended, Dhanapati said, "Do you remain here for to-day: to-morrow we shall do what we think best."

Here and there, there were various machines (instruments?) in which were beautiful palaces of gold, shining with various gems. The king was unable to ascertain them fully,—he only understood that some rooms were made of lead and stone; some were made of white, red or blue marble. At intervals were crystal pillars. The gates, doors, &c., were made of ivory, silver or gold. The windows were decked with gems, and studded with pearls, corals, diamonds, rubies, moon-stones and sapphires. There were nine doors. Within the hall sat on a sapphire throne a red person; on both sides stood two others,—one white, the other red. One bore a sword; the other a buckler. From four springs fragrant waters flew upwards, and as they touched the ground, lo! they were changed into a chain of pearls. Anon issued two crystal damsels to take the chain; but they were demanded by the warders to desist. On this one fled; the other hung the chain on the neck of

the personage on the throne, and went out. Then the chain melted. This process was then repeated.

In another room sat some monkeys. A cat was playing on an instrument—the mice were singing and dancing. At times, the monkeys with their black faces made various gesticulations, and showing their teeth in a laugh, fell down on the ground, and displayed many ludicrous expressions. Who could restrain his laughter at sight of this? Such a sight would dispel even deep grief. In another room, the air was dark with clouds, and it rumbled loud and deep; now and then the lightning flashed, and the thunder roared. Now, it seemed as if it were all daylight; anon it rained and hailed. In another room, a woman, who sat in the midst of flames, beckoned to all to come to her.

The king was seeing these wonderful sights, when a gate-keeper came to Dhanapati and informed him that the king with his courtiers was seeing the beauty of the palace. Hearing this, Dhanapati took Srimanta, and, seeing from a distance the pale countenance of the king, thought that nothing was impossible to the Divine agency. "He of whom thousands and thousands of kings are in fear, has come to my house without invitation. O God! thou canst do everything." Appearing before the Prince in this sad state of mind, father and son bowed at his feet; they craved his forgiveness for the past. After mutual embraces, Srimanta said, "Sire, I am the cause of your sorrow. But should you judge rightly, I am not

to blame. First I had made known to you the supernatural events. But you didn't believe me, through the evil advice of your minister." "No more of that, my child," replied the Prince. "Now, if you marry my daughter, Bhubana Mohini, and consent to be installed as heir to the throne, then my dearest wish is attained." "Those feet which are unattainable by long prayer," said Dhanapati, "I have received easily. What more can I expect! Now, my prayer is, do you deign, Sire, to grace my house with your presence." Seeing the sincerity and kindness of Dayásindhu, the king thought, "I didn't expect such kindness at the hands of those with whom I had behaved very cruelly. I should go to Srimanta's house." Dhanapati took the Prince to his house, and conducted him to a gemmed throne. The Prince sat upon it, and Dhanapati worshipped the royal feet. He then entertained the king sumptuously, and said humbly, "Sire, may it please Your Majesty to stay here to-day, and to go to the town to-morrow, early in the morning." At the sincere request of Dhanapati, the King consented, for his own interest. Táravati and other ladies began to see royalty through the windows. Dhanapati entertained his guests splendidly, and led the king to a milk-white bed. When it was late, the King rose and said, "What's the use of delaying more? Bring my Srimanta, and order my charioteer to get my car ready. I have determined to give my daughter to Srimanta to-day—no more delay." Dhanapati rose and went into the

inner apartment. When he communicated the intelligence to Tárávatí, she said, "How can the marriage be celebrated to-day? More specially, as we have to ask the opinion of my father, the Gandharva king, and must act accordingly." Pleased at this advice, the merchant communicated it to his son, who said, "Then let His Majesty pass this night here. I shall request the Gandharva king to come over, and let me have his advice. We shall go together to the royal palace to-morrow morning." Agreeing to this, Dhanapati came to the king, and said, "Sire, I have no power to disobey the commands of Your Majesty; but may it please Your Majesty to comply with my request. I request you to pass the night here. I beseech you to do this." The king consented for his own interest. Srimanta went to Tárávatí and said, "Mother, to-day, your father, the Gandharva king, will come here. If you wish to see him, pray get ready." When it was night, as Srimanta remembered the royal Gandharva, he appeared, and asked Srimanta, "Wherefore have you remembered me?" Srimanta answered, "Lord! may it please you to suffer yourself to be seen by my mother. Another word. According to your orders, the King has come here, and proposed the alliance. Now I await your decision." "Child," asked the king of Gandharvas, "where is your mother? I will first see her, and then express my views."

Then as the King of Gandharvas was approaching Tárávatí with Srimanta, she was suddenly struck with

brightness as of the sun, and thought, "What's this? The sun never shines so in a room; more especially, as it is night." Reading the thought of Táravatí, the King of Gandharvas said, "My darling! I am your father, the King of Gandharvas. I have come to see you." And the lady, with tearful eyes, fell at the feet of her father, who took hold of her hands, raised her up, and wiped her face with his sheet. Srimanta led the king to a gemmed throne. Táravatí stood at the feet of the Prince, and began to cast liquid glances on her father's face, and on the ground alternately. The royal Gandharva moistened his daughter with blissful tears. The ecstasy of joy at the happy union after so long a separation deprived both of speech—both remained mute for a while. Then the king said, "My love! No need of weeping more. I am always wishing for your weal. I have been unhappy ever since I cursed you. I had become blind, by virtue of a sage's curse, for having cursed you without reason. Your Srimanta has relieved me from blindness. Therefore I shall ever remember him." "Child," he went on, "you will never come by evil, by the grace of Kátyáyani." "Father," answered Táravatí, in tones thrilling with emotion, "you are full of kindness. That you have deigned to show yourself to me has delighted me beyond measure. But the measure of my happiness will not be full so long as I do not see my mother. Father, how is my mother dear? Does she remember this forlorn wretch? Are my companions well? Is all well with the

Jaksha world? Father! father! how do I wish to see them!" "Child," said the Gandharva, "it is also the wish of your mother that you may soon go back to our house. But my wish is that your Srimanta may be monarch of this terraqueous world, and be the crown of kings, with his sons and grandsons enlightening the world with his fame and glory, and so making it more glorious than heaven itself. After this, when he will go to the Gandharva world, I will bequeath the empire to him, and go to the Himalaya to meditate on the God of gods. Therefore, my dear, do you enjoy earthly comforts for a length of time." After thus consoling Táravati, he gave his advice as regards the marriage of Srimanta with the king's daughter, and departed.

The next day Dhanapati came to the king of Magadha, and said, agreeably to the instructions of the Gandharva Prince, "Your Majesty, I have no objection to the match. But I am a merchant; Your Majesty is a Kshetriya. If you give your Kshetriya daughter to the son of a merchant, the other princes may prove hostile to you, and bring disgrace upon your hitherto unblemished line. Your Majesty should therefore act with the consent of the Kshetrias. Your Majesty should go to your capital and invite all the subordinate Princes. When they shall have arrived, I will come to you with Srimanta."

The king consented to the advice of Dhanapati, and on the eve of leaving the place said, "What you have said is good. But should the princes object to

the match, and take up arms, how should I defeat them?" "Your Majesty," replied Dhanapati, "need not fear on that score. Bless my Srimanta. He alone will do everything." Thereupon the king went to his house. On reaching home, he sent invitation letters to the kings of Anga, Baṅga, Kalinga, Tāṭilaṅga, Saurāṣṭra, Drāvira, Magadha; Andra, Kāśī, Kāncī and Abantī.

Durjoy Singha, king of Andra, got wroth in receiving the letter, and said to his counsellors, "Ho! Sirs! what do you think is here? The prince of Magadha is going to give his daughter in marriage to the son of a merchant. What do you advise?" Then the counsellors said, with clasped hands, "Sire, Your Majesty is a king. You can do anything you like. It would be better on the part of Your Majesty to consult other princes as to the propriety of going there or not." "We should expel the king of Magadha," said the prince, "and taking his daughter by force, bestow her on a Kshetriya; else the Kshetrias will come to disgrace by this *mésalliance*. Do you therefore make known my mind to all the other princes, that they may at once come with their armies." Agreeably to this injunction, the minister wrote to the princes. They soon came with their forces, and meeting with Durjoy Singha, marched to Magadha. Having encamped there, they sent an ambassador to the king of Magadha. The messenger came to the prince and said, "May it please Your Majesty! Durjoy Singha has come here with the princes of

various countries. If Your Majesty wishes to save your country, you should pay tribute to Durjoy Singha, and give him your daughter; else the fight would take place to-morrow, early in the morning." The king of Magadha was frightened, and calling in Srimanta, acquainted him with the message. Srimanta said to the messenger, "Tell your king to prepare for battle to-morrow, early in the morning." Having done this, he went to his own house, and remembered the servants of the Gandharva king, who immediately appeared. "Of those who will come to fight to-morrow," said Srimanta, "do you benumb the hands and feet of all, excepting the kings." Then he called the general of Magadha and said, "To-morrow do you lead your forces to the field, and be present there." The general accordingly spread a proclamation in the army regarding the coming fight. The men, amounting to sixty thousand, well equipped, appeared on the field before daybreak. Then Durjoy Singha came to the field with the princes, surrounded by the forces. First the word-fight, then the arms-fight—there was great uproar. Then Srimanta entered the field on horseback, and saw that the Magadha forces were being beaten. He remembered the Gandharvas, who came invisibly and sent such shouts that the hostile forces fainted on hearing them. At this opportunity, the Gandharvas fell to benumbing their hands and feet, and depriving them of their weapons. After a while they recovered, but had no motion. The kings saw the

condition of the troops, and despaired; when the Gandharvas chained Durjoy Singha, the king of Udra, and having conveyed him through the air, imprisoned him in the jail of Udra, and liberated the prisoners. Seeing these wonderful things, and the pitiable condition of the king, the guards hastened to the minister, who came to the prison with the king's son. They wept on seeing the king. Then they called a blacksmith, whose hands became themselves fast shackled as soon as he tried to cut off the king's chains. As many persons as tried to cut the chains became enchained themselves. The rumour spread that all the inhabitants were being imprisoned; so that thinking it expedient to leave the country, the inhabitants began to desert it. Seeing this, the minister thought that it was nothing else than the might of Srimanta. "So that unless I go to that great man with the king's son, there is no hope of saving His Majesty." Learning this, Durjoy Singha advised his son to go to Srimanta with the minister. On the other side, witnessing the deplorable plight of the troops, the assembled kings began to ask Srimanta to have mercy, and agreed to pay tribute to him. Srimanta said with a smile, "You needn't be apprehensive; the armies will be restored to their natural condition. Pray, do you dismiss your troops, and remain here some time." As soon as he had said this, the host was restored to its natural condition. The kings sent their respective armies to their countries, and remained be-

hind. When the banner of Srimanta's victory floated in the air, the king of Magadha said to his minister, "To-day will take place the nuptials of Srimanta and my daughter; so do you prepare for the ceremony; and making ready for the assembly, bring Srimanta and Dhanapati. Invite also all the princes to the assembly." Having received the orders of His Majesty, the officers prepared everything. In the evening, Dhanapati arrived at the court with Srimanta. When the princes were assembled, the king of Magadha gave his daughter, Bhuvanamahinī, to Srimanta, according to all the sanctimonious rites. Srimanta entered the bridal chamber with the princess. The king entertained Dhanapati in a richly furnished apartment. He entertained the princes with banquets; and then they retired to their appointed quarters.

Next day, on Srimanta expressing his desire to go home, the king called the priests and courtiers, and at an auspicious hour invested Srimanta with the insignia of royalty.

Then, when the princes had met to pay tribute to the new king, Cheit Sing, son of Durjoy Singha, came before Srimanta with his father's minister, and said with clasped hands, "Sire, save Durjoy Singha, our king." "I am a merchant," said Srimanta; "Durjoy Singha is a Kshetraya—a puissant prince. How can I save him? If you can in all humility crave the forgiveness of the king of Magadha before all the princes, then only can you find relief. Else

there is no hope." Cheit Sing said, "Whoever touches my father is involved in his fate! How then can we bring him here?" * Saying this, he fell down at the feet of Srimanta, and began to cry. Srimanta was naturally kind-hearted; he was touched with the grief of Cheit Sing, and said, "Do you stay a little. Your father will be here presently." Then Srimanta called the servants of the Gandharva, and said, "Do you bring Durjoy Singha through the air, and place him at the feet of His Majesty of Magadha." They brought Durjoy Singha in a short time, and placed him at the feet of the king of Magadha. The kings were awe-struck with the sight of this, and fell to praying. Srimanta told them to be of good cheer, and said, "Your Majesty, this person is called Durjoy Singha. It is he who was the head of all these princes. He is very proud. If he has offended you through error, pray forgive him. If you permit, I will release him." "The great should regard the honor of honorable men," answered the king. Then at a signal from Srimanta, Durjoy Singha was released by the Gandharvas, and he thereupon began to pray. Then the king of Magadha embraced Durjoy Singha, and made him sit by him. "Princes," said he, "I have given my daughter to Srimanta, and have invested him with the offices of royalty; you should pay him tribute; I retire from this government." Hearing this, the kings paid Srimanta tribute. The heavens now rained blossoms. Then, when the princes asked farewell of king Srimanta, he said,

"You have suffered no end of troubles at my hands. Do you therefore deign to come to my house and dine." The princes consented. The young king then took farewell of his royal father-in-law, and went to the inner apartment. The ladies decked out Bhubanamohini, and performed the *siri-dhāra* ceremony. Srimanta thought, "Since I shall have to go home with the princes, I should have a divine car." Having decided thus, he expressed his intention to the servants of the Gandharva. They fetched a divine car. Having ascended the wonderful car, as the astonished princes were extolling Srimanta, Durjoy Singha thought, "Where else shall I get such a good bridegroom? Therefore I will also give my daughter to Srimanta." He then with clasped hands expressed his desire to Srimanta. The latter said, "Sir, I will let you know my mind to-morrow." Having beguiled the way by such talk, they arrived at Srimanta's house.

The inmates took the bride into the inner apartment. Rāmnāth appointed servants to wait on the princes. There were no bounds to the joy of Tārāvatī. Nalinī and Promodā* made merry with the princess. The princes dined. They admired the wealth of Srimanta, and extolled his 'mighty magic.' When it had got late, Srimanta remembered the Gandharva king, and said, "Sir, I wish to show the Gandharva court to these assembled princes. But how can I do so without your permission?"

Her other name is *Promodini*.

“What’s the wonder?” answered the Gandharva. He thereupon called his servant and said, “Do you bring my theatre and court from the Gandharva world to the house of Srimanta within three hours, and invite the Jakhas and Gandharvas. Bring the dancing girls of heaven to sing and dance. Never disobey any orders which Srimanta may issue.” Having given these directions, the Gandharva went to his own place. Then the servants brought down the Gandharva court. The Jakhas and Gandharvas came. The Kinnaris began to sing and dance. It is not possible for any human pen to describe the beauties of the court; for having heard of it, Indra himself came and sojourned there. Then when the servants informed Srimanta of the establishment of the Gandharva court, Srimanta sent a heavenly car to Kisarilál Singha for his conveyance. The king arrived at Srimanta’s place and learnt all. Then Srimanta informed the princes who came before him. He said, “I have prepared a court for the entertainment of Your Highnesses. Pray, deign to grace it with your presence. I have also got some royal robes, by supernatural means; I shall feel obliged by your accepting them.” Saying this, he made a signal to the servants, who immediately fetched some robes, glittering with gems. The princes took them, and considered themselves as above human nature.

The king of Magadha came with Dhanapati, and surveyed the splendour of the court. The kings thought, “Have we come to Heaven! Have the

ethereal substances of the gods become visible to mortal sight! What a wonder! But how can we enter into the fiery splendour?" Knowing their surprise, Srimanta said, "This is no fire; this is the lustre of the court, and the flaming glory of the Gandharvas and Jakhas. You need not be apprehensive. Pray, enter the court without fear."

When Srimanta entered the court with the princes, the king of Magadha and Dhanapati were led to the higher seats. Srimanta sat by them on a lower seat. The princes sat on their respective seats. Now the Apsaras began to sing and dance. Their music charms the gods themselves—not to say of men. Indra saw the assembly from the sky, and rained blossoms. All the guests, excepting Dhanapati, Srimanta and the princes, had eyes which had no twinkling, and bodies without their shadows. They had never before touched the earth. Seeing all these supernatural things, the kings thought themselves blest. The court broke with the dawn; and each wended to his own place.

The next day Srimanta called the king of Andra and said, "To Your Highness' proposal of yesterday, I have no objection. But I won't marry again. If you wish to enter into relationship with myself, do you then give your daughter to my first wife's brother, Kirti Chandra Roy. He is no common man; he is the son of the noble Vadra Sen Roy of Rámnagar. He is in my house. If you permit, I will call him." Then Srimanta ordered a servant to call Kirti

Chandra to the court. Durjoy Singha saw the young man, and said to Srimanta, "If I have to give my daughter to any other than Your Majesty, I will give her to him." The match was settled, and the minister was sent to bring the damsel. At an auspicious hour, Durjoy Singha gave his daughter to Kirti Chandra. Then Srimanta bade farewell to the princes, appointed Rámnáth as his minister, and began to reign happily.

During the reign of Srimanta, the earth yielded abundant harvests; the kine were filled with nectar, the highways were safe, and the subjects were virtuous. After some time, both wives of Srimanta were in the family way. When it was full ten months, they gave birth to two sons, bearing all the auspicious marks. The palace overflowed with joy. The delight of Dhanapati and his consort on seeing their grand-children may well be conceived. Then the *annaprásana* and other ceremonies were celebrated. The boys grew up like the moon and increased the happiness of their parents. When they reached the age of five, they were placed under the tuition of a good teacher. Afterwards the two wives of Srimanta brought forth two daughters. Rámnáth had a son. The sons of Srimanta in a short time became versed in the arts and sciences. When the sons and daughters became marriageable, Srimanta married them. After enjoying the throne, he made over the sceptre to his eldest son, Vírbáhu. Then Táravátí began to pray :—

“ O Bhagabati, thou hast been pleased to confer royalty on my Srimanta. May thy kindness always last ! ”

“ In the meantime a messenger had come from the Gandharva world and said, “ Your Majesty, the king of Gandharvas has expressed his intention of going to the Himalayas for devotion. He has therefore desired you to go to him, with your friends and relatives ; so that he may make over to you the charge of the kingdom.” Srimanta dismissed the emissary by intimating that he should meet with the Gandharva prince in a fortnight. He then consulted with his parents and the ex-king of Magadha, and called the dependant princes. “ Your Highnesses,” said Srimanta, “ I shall now go to the Gandharva world, with my friends and relatives, to rule there. If you render the same homage to my son, that you have done to me, I hope you will reign in peace.” He then imparted the Gandharva incantations to Rāmnāth and said, “ Do you now remain here for sometime. Whenever necessary, you will be able to go to the Gandharva world, by virtue of the incantations.” Next he called his two sons, embraced them and smelled their crowns. “ You will reign in perfect happiness,” said he. “ Show your affection for His Highness, Durjoy Singha. You must also regard the honor of these princes.” He was speaking thus, when a glorious car descended from heaven, when Srimanta said, “ Farewell to all ! If I have been guilty of any offence, pray excuse me.” At this, all began to weep.

Then Srimanta entered the car with Dhanapati, Tárávatí, the ex-king of Magadha and his consort, and Srimanta's two wives ; and began to go through the air. Seeing this wonderful sight, all stood like statues. In a short time the car disappeared, when the spectators felt sad. They then began to go to their quarters, praising the glory and might of Srimanta.

END.



The Monastery.

INTRODUCTION—(1886.)

It would be difficult to assign any good reason why the author of *Ivanhoe*, after using, in that work, all the art he possessed to remove the personages, action, and manners of the tale, to a distance from his own country, should choose for the scene of his next attempt the celebrated ruins of Melrose, in the immediate neighbourhood of his own residence. But the reason, or caprice, which dictated his change of system, has entirely escaped his recollection, nor is it worth while to attempt recalling what must be a matter of very little consequence.

The general plan of the story was, to conjoin two characters in that bustling and contentious age, who, thrown into situations which gave them different views on the subject of the Reformation, should, with the same sincerity and purity of intention, dedicate themselves, the one to the support of the sinking fabric of the Catholic Church, the other to the establishment of the Reformed doctrines. It was supposed that some interesting subjects for narrative might be derived from opposing two such enthusiasts to each other in the path of life, and contrasting the real worth of both with their passions and prejudices. The localities of Melrose suited well the scenery of the proposed story; the ruins themselves form a splendid theatre for any tragic incident which might be brought forward; joined to the vicinity of the fine river, with all its tributary streams, flowing through a country which has been the scene of so much fierce fighting, and is rich with so many recollections of former times, and lying almost under the immediate eye of the author, by whom they were to be used in composition.

The situation possessed farther recommendations. On the opposite bank of the Tweed might be seen the remains of ancient enclosures, surrounded by sycamores and ash-trees of considerable size. These had once formed the courts or arable ground of a village, now reduced to a single hut, the abode of a fisherman, who also manages a ferry. The cot-

tages, even the church which once existed there, have sunk into vestiges hardly to be traced without visiting the spot, the inhabitants having gradually withdrawn to the more prosperous town of Gala-shiele, which has risen into consideration, within two miles of their neighbourhood. Superstitious old, however, has tenanted the deserted groves with aerial beings, to supply the want of the mortal tenants who have deserted it. The ruined and abandoned churchyard, of Boldside has been long believed to be haunted by the Fairies, and the deep broad current of the Tweed, wheeling in moonlight round the foot of the steep bank, with the number of trees originally planted for shelter round the field of the cottagers, but now presenting the effect of scattered and detached groves, fill up the idea which one would form in imagination for a scene that Oberon and Queen Mab might love to revel in. There are evenings when the spectators might believe, with Father Chaucer, that the

— "Queen of Faery,
With harp, and pipe, and symphony,
Were dwelling in the place."

"Another, and even a more familiar refuge of the elfin race, (if tradition is to be trusted,) is the glen of the river, or rather brook, named the Allen, which falls into the Tweed from the northward, about a quarter of a mile above the present bridge. As the streamlet finds its way behind Lord Somerville's hunting-seat, called the Pavilion, its valley has been popularly termed the Fairy Dean, or rather the Nameless Dean, because of the supposed ill luck attached by the popular faith of ancient times, to any one who might name or allude to the race, whom our fathers distinguished as the Good Neighbours, and the Highlanders called *Dacine Shie*, or *Men of Peace*; rather by way of compliment, than on account of any particular idea of friendship or pacific relation which either Highlander or Borderer entertained towards the invisible beings whom they thus distinguished, or supposed them to bear to humanity."

in evidence of the actual operations of the fairy people even at this time, little pieces of calcareous matter are found in the glen after a flood, which either the labours of those tiny artists, or the eddies of the brook among the stones, have formed into a fantastic resemblance of cups, saucers, basins, and the like, in which children who gather them pretend to discern fairy utensils.

Besides these circumstances of romantic locality, *mon pauperis regna* (as Captain Dalgetty denominates his territory of Drumthwacket) are bounded by a small but deep lake, from which eyes that yet look on the light are said to have seen the water-bull ascend, and shake the hills with his roar.

Indeed, the country around Melrose, if possessing less of romantic beauty than some other scenes in Scotland, is connected with so many associations of a fanciful nature, in which the imagination takes delight, as might well induce one even less attached to the spot than the author, to accommodate, after a general manner, the imaginary scenes he was framing to the localities to which he was partial. But it would be a misapprehension to suppose that, because Melrose may in general pass for Kenilworth, or because it agrees with scenes of the Monastery in the circumstances of the drawbridge, the mill-dam, and other points of resemblance, that therefore an accurate or perfect local similitude is to be found in all the particulars of the picture. It was not the purpose of the author to present a landscape copied from nature, but a piece of composition, in which a real scene, with which he is familiar, had afforded him some leading outlines. Thus the resemblance of the imaginary Glendearg with the real vale of the Allen, is far from being minute, nor did the author aim at identifying them. This must appear plain to all who know the actual character of the Glen of Allen, and have taken the trouble to read the account of the imaginary Glendearg. The stream in the latter case is described as wandering down a romantic little valley, shifting itself, after the fashion of such a brook, from one side to the other, as it can most easily find its passage, and touching nothing in its progress that gives token of cultivation. It rises near a solitary tower, the abode of a supposed church vassal, and the scene of several incidents in the Romance.

The real Allen, on the contrary, after traversing the romantic ravine called the Nameless Dean, thrown off from side to side alternately, like a billiard ball repelled by the sides of the table on which it has been played, and in that part of its course resembling the stream which pours down Glendearg, may be traced upwards into a more open country, where the banks retreat farther from each other, and the vale exhibits a good deal of dry ground, which has not been neglected by the active cultivators of the district. It arrives, too, at a sort of termination, striking in itself, but totally irreconcilable with the narrative of the Romance. Instead

of a single peel-house, or border tower of defence, such as Dame Glendinning is supposed to have inhabited, the head of the Allen, about five miles above its junction with the Tweed, shews three ruins of Border houses, belonging to different proprietors, and each, from the desire of mutual support so natural to troublesome times, situated at the extremity of the property of which it is the principal message. One of these is the ruinous mansion-house of Hillslap, formerly the property of the Cairncrosses, and now of Mr Innes of Stow; a second the tower of Colmachie, an ancient inheritance of the Borthwick family, as is testified by their crest, the Goat's Head, which exists on the ruin; a third, the house of Langshaw, also ruinous, but near which the proprietor, Mr Baillie of Jerviswood and Mellerstain, has built a small shooting box.

All these ruins, so strangely huddled together in a very solitary spot, have recollections and traditions of their own, but none of them bear the most distant resemblance to the descriptions in the Romance of the Monastery; and as the author could hardly have erred so grossly regarding a spot within a morning's ride of his own house, the inference is, that no resemblance was intended. Hillslap is remembered by the humours of the last inhabitants, two or three elderly ladies, of the class of Miss Raylands, in the Old Manor House, though less important by birth and fortune. Colmachie is commemorated in song:—

Colmachie stands on Colmachie hill,
The water it flows round Colmachie mill;
The mill and the kiln gang homely,
And it's up with the whippers of Colmachie!

Langshaw, although larger than the other mansions assembled at the head of the supposed Glendearg, has nothing about it more remarkable than the inscription of the present proprietor on the shooting lodge—*Utinam hanc etiam viris inanis*—a modest wish, which I know not more capable of attaining upon an extended scale than the gentleman who has expressed it upon a limited one.

Having thus shewn that I could say something of these desolated towers, which the desire of social intercourse, or the facility of mutual defence, had drawn together at the head of this Glen, I need not add any farther reason to shew, that there is no resemblance between them and the solitary habitation of Dame Elspeth Glendinning. Beyond these dwellings are some remains of natural wood, and a considerable portion of morass and bog; but I would not advise any who may be curious in localities, to spend time in looking for the fountain and holly-tree of the White Lady.

While I am on the subject I may add, that Captain Clutterbuck, the imaginary editor of the Monastery, has no real prototype in the village of Melrose or neighbourhood, that ever I saw or heard of. To give some individuality to this personage, he is described as a character which sometimes

occurs in actual society—a person who, having spent his life within the necessary duties of a technical profession, from which he has been at length emancipated, finds himself without any occupation whatever, and is apt to become the prey of ennui, until he discerns some petty subject of investigation commensurate to his talents, the study of which gives him employment in solitude; while the conscious possession of information peculiar to himself, adds to his consequence in society. I have often observed, that the lighter and trivial branches of antiquarian study are singularly useful in relieving vacuity of such a kind, and have known them serve many a Captain Clutterbuck to retreat upon; I was therefore a good deal surprised, when I found the antiquarian Captain identified with a neighbour and friend of my own, who could never have been confounded with him by any one who had read the book, and seen the party alluded to. This erroneous identification occurs in a work entitled, "Illustrations of the Author of *Waverley*, being Notices and Anecdotes of real Characters, Scenes, and Incidents, supposed to be described in his works, by Robert Chambers." This work was, of course, liable to many errors, as any one of the kind must be, whatever may be the ingenuity of the author, which takes the task of explaining what can be only known to another person. Mistakes of place or inanimate things referred to, are of very little moment; but the ingenious author ought to have been more cautious of attaching real names to fictitious characters. I think it is in the *Spectator* we read of a rustic wag, who, in a copy of "The Whole Duty of Man," wrote opposite to every vice the name of some individual in the neighbourhood, and thus converted that excellent work into a libel on a whole parish.

The scenery being thus ready at the author's hand, the reminiscences of the country were equally favourable. In a land where the horses remained almost constantly saddled, and the sword seldom quitted the warrior's side—where war was the natural and constant state of the inhabitants, and peace only existed in the shape of brief and feverish truces—there could be no want of the means to complicate and extricate the incidents of his narrative at pleasure. There was a disadvantage, notwithstanding, in treading this Border district, for it had been already ransacked by the author himself, as well as others; and unless presented under a new light, was likely to afford ground to the objection of *Cremate bis cocta*.

To attain the indispensable quality of novelty, something, it was thought, might be gained by contrasting the character of the vassals of the church with those of the dependants of the lay barons, by whom they were surrounded. But much advantage could not be derived from this. There were, indeed, differences betwixt the two classes, but, like tribes in the mineral and vegetable world, which, resembling each other to com-

mon eyes, can be sufficiently well discriminated by naturalists, they were yet too similar, upon the whole, to be placed in marked contrast with each other.

Machinery remained—the introduction of the supernatural and marvellous; the resort of distressed authors since the days of Horace, but whose privileges as a sanctuary have been disputed in the present age, and well-nigh exploded. The popular belief no longer allows the possibility of existence to the race of mysterious beings which hovered betwixt this world and that which is invisible. The fairies have abandoned their moonlight turf; the witch no longer holds her black orgies in the heathen dell; and

"Even the last lingering phantom of the brain,
The churchyard ghost, is now at rest again."

From the discredit attached to the vulgar and more common modes in which the Scottish superstition displays itself, the author was induced to have recourse to the beautiful, though almost forgotten, theory of astral spirits, or creatures of the elements, surpassing human beings in knowledge and power, but inferior to them, as being subject, after a certain space of years, to a death which is to them annihilation, as they have no share in the promise made to the sons of Adam. These spirits are supposed to be of four distinct kinds, as the elements from which they have their origin, and are known, to those who have studied the cabalistical philosophy, by the names of Sylphs, Gnomes, Salamanders, and Nainds, as they belong to the elements of Air, Earth, Fire, or Water. The general reader will find an entertaining account of these elementary spirits in the French book, entitled, "*Entretiens de Compté du Gabalais*." The ingenious *Compte de la Motte Fongus* composed, in German, one of the most successful productions of his fertile brain, where a beautiful and even afflicting effect is produced by the introduction of a water-nymph, who loses the privilege of immortality, by consenting to become accessible to human feelings, and uniting her lot with that of a mortal, who treats her with ingratitude.

In imitation of an example so successful, the White Lady of Avenel was introduced into the following sheets. She is represented as connected with the family of Avenel by one of those mystic ties, which, in ancient times, were supposed to exist, in certain circumstances, between the creatures of the elements and the children of men. Such instances of mysterious union are recognized in Ireland, in the real Milesian families, who are possessed of a Banshee; and they are known among the traditions of the Highlands, which, in many cases, attached an immortal being or spirit to the service of particular families or tribes. These demons, if they are to be called so, announced good or evil fortune to the families connected with them; and though some only condescended to meddle with matters of importance, others, like the

May Mollach, or Maid of the Ilairy Arms, condescended to mingle in ordinary sports, and even to direct the Chief how to play at draughts.

There was, therefore, no great violence in supposing such a being as this to have existed, while the elementary spirits were believed in; but it was more difficult to describe or imagine its attributes and principles of action. Shakspeare, the first of authorities in such a case, has painted Ariel, that beautiful creature of his fancy, as 'only approaching so near to humanity as to know the nature of that sympathy which the creatures of clay felt for each other, as we learn from the expression—"Mine would, if I were human." The inferences from this are singular, but seem capable of regular deduction. A being, however superior to man in length of life—in power over the elements—in certain perceptions respecting the present, the past, and the future, yet still incapable of human passions, of sentiments of moral good and evil, of meriting future rewards or punishments, belongs rather to the class of animals, than of human creatures, and must therefore be presumed to act more from temporary benevolence or caprice, than from any thing approaching to feeling or reasoning. Such a being's superiority in power can only be compared to that of the elephant or lion, who are greater in strength than man, though inferior in the scale of creation. The partialities which we suppose such spirits to entertain must be like those of the dog; their sudden starts of passion, or the indulgence of a frolic, or mischief, may be compared to those of the numerous varieties of the cat. All these propensities are, however, controlled by the laws which render the elementary race subordinate to the command of man—liable to be subjected by his science, (so the sect of Gnostics believed, and on this turned the Rosicrucian philosophy,) or to be overpowered by his superior courage and daring, when it set their illusions at defiance.

It is with reference to this idea of the supposed spirits of the elements, that the White Lady of Avenel is represented as acting a varying, capricious, and inconsistent part in the pages assigned to her in the narrative; manifesting interest and attachment to the family with whom her destinies are associated, but evincing whim, and even a species of malevolence, towards other mortals, as the Sacristan and the Border robber, whose incorrect life subjected them to receive petty mortifications at her hand. The White Lady is scarcely supposed, however, to have possessed either the power or the inclination to do more than inflict terror or create embarrassment, and is always subjected by those mortals, who, by virtuous resolution, and mental energy, could assert superiority over her. In these particulars she seems to constitute a being of a middle class, between the *esprit follet* who places its pleasure in misleading and tormenting mortals, and the benevolent Fairy of

the East, who uniformly guides, aids, and supports them.

Either, however, the author executed his purpose indifferently, or the public did not approve of it; for the White Lady of Avenel was far from being popular. He does not now make the present statement, in the view of arguing readers into a more favourable opinion on the subject, but merely with the purpose of exculpating himself from the charge of having wantonly intruded into the narrative a being of inconsistent powers and propensities.

In the delineation of another character, the author of the Monastery failed, where he hoped for some success. As nothing is so successful a subject of ridicule as the fashionable follies of the time, it occurred to him that the more serious scenes of his narrative might be relieved by the humour of a cavaliero of the age of Queen Elizabeth. In every period, the attempt to gain and maintain the highest rank of society, has depended on the power of assuming and supporting a certain fashionable kind of affectation, usually connected with some vivacity of talent and energy of character, but distinguished at the same time by a transcendent flight, beyond sound reason and common sense; both faculties too vulgar to be admitted into the estimate of one who claims to be esteemed "a choice spirit of the age." These, in their different phases, constitute the gallants of the day, whose boast it is to drive the whims of fashion to extremity.

On all occasions, the manners of the sovereign, the court, and the time, must give the tone to the peculiar description of qualities by which those who would attain the height of fashion must seek to distinguish themselves. The reign of Elizabeth, being that of a maiden queen, was distinguished by the decorum of the courtiers, and especially the affectation of the deepest deference to the sovereign. After the acknowledgment of the Queen's matchless perfections, the same devotion was extended to beauty as it existed among the lesser stars in her court, who sparkled, as it was the mode to say, by her reflected lustre. It is true, that gallant knights no longer vowed to Heaven, the peacock, and the ladies, to perform some feat of extravagant chivalry, in which they endangered the lives of others as well as their own; but although their chivalrous displays of personal gallantry seldom went farther in Elizabeth's days than the tilt-yard, where barricades, called barriers, prevented the shock of the horses, and limited the display of the cavaliers' skill to the comparatively safe encounter of their lances, the language of the lovers to their ladies was still in the exalted terms which Amadis would have addressed to Oriana, before encountering a dragon for her sake. This tone of romantic gallantry found a clever but conceited author, to reduce it to a species of constitution and form, and lay down the courtly manner of conversation

in a pedantic book, called *Euphuus* and his England. Of this, a brief account is given in the text, to which it may now be proper to make some additions.

The extravagance of *Euphuism*, or a symbolical jargon of the same class, predominates in the romances of Calprenade and Scuderi, which were read for the amusement of the fair sex of France during the long reign of Louis XIV., and were supposed to contain the only legitimate language of love and gallantry. In this reign they encountered the satire of Molière and Boileau. A similar disorder, spreading into private society, formed the ground of the affected dialogue of the *Précieuses*, as they were styled, who formed the coterie of the Hotel de Rambouillet, and afforded Molière matter for his admirable comedy, *Les Précieuses Ridicules*. In England, the humour does not seem to have long survived the accession of James I.

The author had the vanity to think that a character, whose peculiarities should turn on extravagances which were once universally fashionable, might be read in a fictitious story with a good chance of affording amusement to the existing generation, who, fond as they are of looking back on the actions and manners of their ancestors, might be also supposed to be sensible of their absurdities. He must fairly acknowledge that he was disappointed, and that the *Euphuist*, far from being accounted a well drawn and humorous character of the period, was condemned as unnatural and absurd.

It would be easy to account for this failure, by supposing the defect to arise from the author's want of skill, and, probably, many readers may not be inclined to look farther. But, as the author himself can scarcely be supposed willing to acquiesce in this final cause, if any other can be alleged, he has been led to suspect, that, contrary to what he originally supposed, his subject was injudiciously chosen, in which, and not in his mode of treating it, lay the source of the want of success.

The manners of a rude people are always founded on nature, and therefore the feelings of a more polished generation immediately sympathize with them. We need no numerous notes, no antiquarian dissertations, to enable the most ignorant to recognize the sentiments and diction of the characters of Homer; we have but, as Lear says, to strip off our lendings—to set aside the factitious principles and adornments which we have received from our comparatively artificial system of society, and our natural feelings are in unison with those of the bard of Chios and the heroes who live in his verses. It is the same with a great part of the narratives of my friend Mr Cooper. We sympathize with his Indian chiefs and back-woodsmen, and acknowledge, in the characters which he presents to us, the same truth of human nature by which we should feel ourselves influenced if placed in the

same condition. So much is this the case, that though it is difficult, or almost impossible, to reclaim a savage, bred from his youth to war and the chase, to the restraints and the duties of civilized life, nothing is more easy or common, than to find men who have been educated in all the habits and comforts of improved society, willing to exchange them for the wild labours of the hunter and the fisher. The very amusements most pursued and relished by men of all ranks, whose constitutions permit active exercise, are hunting, fishing, and in some instances, war, the natural and necessary business of the savage of Dryden, where his hero talks of being

“As free as nature first made man,
When wild in woods the noble savage ran.”

But although these occupations, and even the sentiments, of barbarian beings in a primitive state, find access and interest in the minds of the more civilized part of the species, it does not therefore follow, that the national tastes, opinions, and follies, of one civilized period, should afford either the same interest or the same amusement to those of another. These generally, when driven to extravagance, are founded, not upon any natural taste proper to the species, but upon the growth of some peculiar cast of affection, with which mankind in general, and succeeding generations in particular, feel no common interest or sympathy. The extravagances of coquetry in manners and apparel are indeed the legitimate, and often the successful objects of satire, during the time when they exist. In evidence of this, theatrical critics may observe how many dramatic *jeux d'esprit* are well received every season, because the satirist levels at some well known or fashionable absurdity; or, in the dramatic phrase, “shoots folly as it flies.” But when the peculiar kind of folly keeps the wing no longer, it is reckoned but waste of powder to pour a discharge of ridicule on what has ceased to exist; and the pieces in which such forgotten absurdities are made the subject of ridicule, fall quietly into oblivion with the follies which gave them fashion, or only continue to exist on the scene, because they contain some other more permanent interest than that which connects them with manners and follies of a temporary character.

This, perhaps, affords a reason why the comedies of Ben Jonson, founded upon system, or what the age termed *humours*,—by which was meant factitious and affected characters, superinduced on that which was common to the rest of their race,—in spite of acute satire, deep scholarship, and strong sense, do not now afford general pleasure, but are confined to the closet of the antiquary, whose studies have assured him that the personages of the dramatist were once, though they are now no longer, portraits of existing nature.

Let us take another example of our hypothesis from Shakespeare himself, who, of all authors, drew

his portraits for all ages. With the whole sum of the idolatry which affects us at his name, the mass of readers peruse, without amusement, the characters formed on the extravagances of temporary fashion; and the Euphuist Don Armado, the pedant Holofernes, even Nym and Pistol, are read with little pleasure by the mass of the public, being portraits of which we cannot recognize the humour, because the originals no longer exist. In like manner, while the distresses of Romeo and Juliet continue to interest every bosom, Mercutio, drawn as an accurate representation of the finished fine gentleman of the period, and as such received by the unanimous approbation of contemporaries, has so little to interest the present age, that, stripped of all his puns and quirks of verbal wit, he only retains his place in the scene, in virtue of his fine and fanciful speech upon dreaming, which belongs to no particular age, and because he is a personage whose presence is indispensable to the plot.

We have already prosecuted perhaps too far an argument, the tendency of which is to prove, that the introduction of an humorist, acting like Sir Piercie Shafton, upon some forgotten and obsolete model of folly, once fashionable, is rather likely to awaken the disgust of the reader, as unnatural, than find him food for laughter. Whether owing to this theory, or whether to the more simple and probable cause of the author's failure in the delineation of the subject he had proposed to himself, the formidable objection of *incredulus odi* was applied to the Euphuist, as well as to the White Lady of Avondale; and the one was denounced as unnatural, while the other was rejected as impossible.

There was little in the story to atone for these failures in two principal points. The incidents were inartificially huddled together. There was no part of the intrigue to which deep interest was found to apply; and the conclusion was brought about, not by incidents arising out of the story itself, but in consequence of public transactions, with which the narrative has little connection, and which the reader had little opportunity to become acquainted with.

This, if not a positive fault, was yet a great defect in the Romance. It is true, that not only the practice of some great authors in this department, but even the general course of human life itself, may be quoted in favour of this more obvious, and less artificial practice, of arranging a narrative. It is seldom that the same circle of personages who have surrounded an individual at his first outset in life, continue to have an interest in his career till his fate comes to a crisis. On the contrary, and more especially if the events of his life be of a varied character, and worth communicating to others, or to the world, the hero's later connections are usually totally separated from those with whom he began the voyage, but whom the individual has outlived; or who have drifted astray, or foundered on the passage. This hackneyed comparison holds

good in another point. The numerous vessels of so many different sorts, and destined for such different purposes, which are launched in the same mighty ocean, although each endeavours to pursue its own course, are in every case more influenced by the winds and tides, which are common to the element which they all navigate, than by their own separate exertions. And it is thus in the world, that, when human prudence has done its best, some general, perhaps national, event, destroys the schemes of the individual, as the casual touch of a more powerful being sweeps away the web of the spider.

Many excellent romances have been composed in this view of human life, where the hero is conducted through a variety of detached scenes, in which various agents appear and disappear, without, perhaps, having any permanent influence on the progress of the story. Such is the structure of *Gil Blas*, *Roderick Random*, and the lives and adventures of many other heroes, who are described as running through different stations of life, and encountering various adventures, which are only connected with each other by having happened to be witnessed by the same individual, whose identity unites them together, as the string of a necklace links the beads, which are otherwise detached.

But though such an unconnected course of adventures is what most frequently occurs in nature, yet the province of the romance writer being artificial, there is more required from him than a mere compliance with the simplicity of reality,—just as we demand from the scientific gardener, that he shall arrange, in curious knots and artificial parterres, the flowers which “nature boon” distributes freely on hill and dale. Fielding, accordingly, in most of his novels, but especially in *Tom Jones*, his *chiefest care*, has set the distinguished example of a story regularly built and consistent in all its parts, in which nothing occurs, and scarce a personage is introduced, that has not some share in tending to advance the catastrophe.

To demand equal correctness and felicity in those who may follow in the track of that illustrious novelist, would be to fetter too much the power of giving pleasure, by surrounding it with penal rules; since of this sort of light literature it may be especially said—*tout genre est permis, hors le genre ennuyeux*. Still, however, the more closely and happily the story is combined, and the more natural and felicitous the catastrophe, the nearer such a composition will approach the perfection of the novelist's art; nor can an author neglect this branch of his profession, without incurring proportional censure.

For such censure the Monastery gave but too much occasion. The intrigue of the Romance, neither very interesting in itself, nor very happily detailed, is at length finally disentangled by the breaking out of national hostilities between England and Scotland, and the as sudden renewal of the truce. Instances of this kind, it is true, cannot be

reality have been uncommon, but the resorting to such, in order to accomplish the catastrophe, as by a *tour de force*, was objected to as inartificial, and not perfectly intelligible to the general reader.

Still the *Monastery*, though exposed to severe and just criticism, did not fail, judging from the extent of its circulation, to have some interest for the public. And this, too, was according to the ordinary course of such matters; for it very seldom happens that literary reputation is gained by a single

effort, and still more rarely is it lost by a solitary miscarriage.

The author, therefore, had his days of grace allowed him, and time, if he pleased, to comfort himself with the burden of the old Scots song,

"If it lma weel bobbit,
We'll bob it again."

ANNOTATIONS.
1st November, 1830. }

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE

FROM

CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK,

LATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S — REGIMENT OF INFANTRY,

TO

THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY."

SIR,

ALTHOUGH I do not pretend to the pleasure of your personal acquaintance, like many whom I believe to be equally strangers to you, I am nevertheless interested in your publications, and desire their continuance;—not that I pretend to much taste in fictitious composition, or that I am apt to be interested in your grave scenes, or amused by those which are meant to be lively. I will not dispute from you, that I have yawned over the last interview of Maelvor and his sister, and fell fairly asleep while the schoolmaster was reading the humours of Dandie Dinmont. You see, sir, that I scorn to solicit your favour in a way to which you are no stranger. If the papers I enclose you are worth nothing, I will not endeavour to recommend them by personal flattery, as a bad cook pours rancid butter upon stale fish. No, sir! what I respect in you, is the light you have occasionally thrown on national antiquities, a study which I have commenced rather late in life, but to which I am attached with the devotion of a first love, because it is the only study I ever cared a farthing for.

You shall have my history, sir, (it will not reach to three volumes,) before that of my manuscript; and as you usually throw out a few lines of verse (by way of skirmishers, I suppose) at the head of

each division of prose, I have had the luck to light upon a stanza in the schoolmaster's copy of Burns which describes me exactly. I love it the better, because it was originally designed for Captain Grose, an excellent antiquary, though, like yourself, some what too apt to treat with levity his own pursuits:

"Tha said he was a soldier bred,
And aye wad rather ta'en than fled;
But now he's quit the spurrie blade,
And dog-ahn walleet,
And ta'en the—antiquarian trade,
I think they call it."

I never could conceive what influenced me, when a boy, in the choice of a profession. Military zeal and ardour it was not, which made me stand out for a commission in the Scots Fusiliers, when my tutors and curators wished to bind me apprentice to old David Stiles, Clerk to his Majesty's Signet. I say, military zeal it was not; for I was no fighting boy in my own person, and cared not a penny to read the history of the heroes who turned the world upside down in former ages. As for courage, I had, as I have since discovered, just as much of it as served my turn, and not one grain of surplus. I soon found out, indeed, that in action there was more danger in running away, than in standing fast; and besides, I could not afford to lose my commission, which was my chief means of

support. But, as for that overboiling *valetur*, which I have heard many of *ours* talk of, though I seldom observed that it influenced them in the actual affair — that exuberant zeal, which courts Danger as a bride, — truly my courage was of a complexion much less ecstasial.

Again, the love of a red coat, which, in default of all other aptitudes to the profession, has made many a bad soldier and some good ones, was an utter stranger to my disposition. I cared not a "boddy" for the company of the misses: Nay, though there was a boarding-school in the village, and though we used to meet with its fair inmates at Simon Lightfoot's weekly Practising, I cannot recollect any strong emotions being excited on these occasions, excepting the infinite regret with which I went through the polite ceremonial of presenting my partner with an orange, thrust into my pocket by my aunt for this special purpose, but which, had I dared, I certainly would have secreted for my own personal use. As for vanity, or love of finery for itself, I was such a stranger to it, that the difficulty was great to make me brush my coat, and appear in proper trim upon parade. I shall never forget the rebuke of my old Colonel on a morning when the King reviewed a brigade of which ours made part. "I am no friend to extravagance," Ensign Clutterbuck," said he; "but, on the day when we are to pass before the Sovereign of the kingdom, in the name of God I would have at least shew a him an inch of clean linen."

Thus, a stranger to the ordinary motives which lead young men to make the army their choice, and without the least desire to become either a hero or a dandy, I really do not know what determined my thoughts that way, unless it were the happy state of half-pay indolence, enjoyed by Captain Doolittle, who had set up his staff of rest in my native village. Every other person had, or seemed to have, something to do, less or more. They did not, indeed, precisely go to school and learn tasks, that last of evils in my estimation; but it did not escape my boyish observation, that they were all bothered with something or other like duty or labour — all but the happy Captain Doolittle. The minister had his parish to visit, and his preaching to prepare, though perhaps he made more fuss than he heeded about both. The laird had his farming and improving operations to superintend; and, besides, he had to attend trustee meetings, and lieutenancy meetings, and head-courts, and meetings of justices, and what not — was as early up, (that I detested,) and as much in the open air, wet and dry, as his own grieve. The shopkeeper (the village boasted but one of eminence) stood indeed pretty much at his ease behind his counter, for his custom was by no means overburdensome; but still he enjoyed his status, as the Pacific calls it, upon condition of supplying all the wares in his booth over and over, when any one chose to want a yard of muslin, a mousetrap, an ounce of caraway, a

paper of pins, the Sermons of Mr Preen, or the Life of Jack the Giant-Killer, (not Killer, as usually erroneously written and pronounced. — See my essay on the true history of this worthy, where real facts have in a peculiar degree been obscured by fable.) In short, all in the village were under the necessity of doing something which they would rather have left undone, excepting Captain Doolittle, who walked every morning in the open street, which formed the high mall of our village, in a blue coat with a red neck, and played at whist the whole evening, when he could make up a party. This happy vacuity of all employment appeared to me so delicious, that it became the primary hint, which, according to the system of Helvetius, as the minister says, determined my infant talents towards the profession I was destined to illustrate.

But who, alas! can form a just estimate of their future prospects in this deceitful world! I was not long engaged in my new profession, before I discovered, that if the independent indolence of half-pay was a paradise, the officer must pass through the purgatory of duty and service in order to gain admission to it. Captain Doolittle might brush his blue coat with the red neck, or leave it unbrushed, at his pleasure: but Ensign Clutterbuck had no such option. Captain Doolittle might go to bed at ten o'clock, if he had a mind; but the Ensign must make the rounds in his turn. What was worse, the Captain might repose under the tester of his tent-bed until noon, if he was so pleased; but the Ensign, God help him, had to appear upon parade at peep of day. As for duty, I made that as easy as I could, had the sergeant to whisper to me the words of command and bustled through as other folks did. Of service, I saw enough for an indolent man — was buffeted up and down the world, and visited both the East and West Indies, Egypt, and other distant places, which my youth had scarce dreamed of. The French I saw, and felt too; witness two fingers on my right hand, which one of their curved humans took off with his sabre as neatly as an hospital surgeon. At length the death of an old aunt, who left me some fifteen hundred pounds, snugly vested in the three per cents, gave me the long-wished-for opportunity of retiring, with the prospect of enjoying a clean shirt and a guinea four times a week at least.

For the purpose of commencing my new way of life, I selected for my residence the village of Kennasquhair, in the south of Scotland, celebrated for the ruins of its magnificent Monastery, intending there to lead my future life in the *eterna* *own* *dignitate* of half-pay and annuity. I was not long, however, in making the grand discovery, that in order to enjoy leisure, it is absolutely necessary it should be preceded by occupation. For some time, it was delightful to wake at daybreak, dreaming of the revels — then to recollect my happy emancipation from the slavery that doomed me to start

at a piece of clattering parchment, turn on my other side, damn the parade, and go to sleep again. But even this enjoyment had its termination; and time, when it became a stock entirely at my own disposal, began to hang heavy on my hand.

I angled for two days, during which time I lost twenty hooks, and several scores of yards of gut and line, and caught not even a minnow. Hunting was out of the question, for the stomach of a horse by no means agrees with the half-pay establishment. When I shot, the shepherds and ploughmen, and my very dog, quizzed me every time that I missed, which was, generally speaking, every time I fired. Besides, the country gentlemen in this quarter like their game, and began to talk of prosecutions and interdicts. I did not give up fighting the French to commence a domestic war with the "pleasant men of Teviotdale," as the song calls them; so I've spent three days (very agreeably) in cleaning my gun, and disposing it upon two hooks over my chimney-piece.

The success of this accidental experiment set me on trying my skill in the mechanical arts. Accordingly, I took down and cleaned my landlady's cuckoo-clock, and in so doing, silenced that companion of the spring for ever and a day. I mounted a turning-lathe, and in attempting to use it, I very nearly cribbed off, with an inch-and-half former, one of the fingers which the hussar had left me.

Books I tried, both those of the little circulating library, and of the more rational subscription collection maintained by this intellectual people. But neither the light reading of the one, nor the heavy artillery of the other, suited my purpose. I always fell asleep at the fourth or fifth page of history or disquisition; and it took me a month's hard reading to wade through a half-bound trashy novel, during which I was pestered with applications to return the volumes, by every half-bred milliner's wairess about the place. In short, during the hours when all the town besides had something to do, I had nothing for it, but to walk in the churchyard, and whistle till it was dinner-time.

During these promenades, the Rains necessarily forced themselves on my attention, and, by degrees, I found myself engaged in studying the more minute ornaments, and at length the general plan, of this noble structure. The old sexton added my labours, and gave me his portion of traditional lore. Every day added something to my stock of knowledge respecting the ancient state of the building; and at length I made discoveries concerning the purpose of several detached and very ruinous portions of it, the use of which had hitherto been either unknown altogether or erroneously explained.

The knowledge which I thus acquired I had frequent opportunities of retailing to those visitors whom the progress of a Scottish tour brought to visit this celebrated spot. Without encroaching

on the privilege of my friend the sexton, I became gradually an assistant Clerone in the task of description and explanation, and often (seeing a fresh party of visitors arrive) has he turned over to me those to whom he had told half his story, with the flattering observation, "What needs I say any more about it! There's the Captain kens mair anent it than I do, or any man in the town." Then would I salute the strangers courteously, and expatiate to their astonished minds upon crypts and chancels, and nave, arches, Gothic and Saxon architraves, mullions and flying buttresses. It not unfrequently happened, that an acquaintance which commenced in the Abbey concluded in the inn, which served to relieve the solitude as well as the monotony of my landlady's shoulder of mutton, whether roast, cold, or hashed.

By degrees my mind became enlarged; I found a book or two which enlightened me on the subject of Gothic architecture, and I read now with pleasure, because I was interested in what I read about. Even my character began to dilate and expand. I spoke with more authority at the club, and was listened to with deference, because on one subject, at least, I possessed more information than any of its members. Indeed, I found that even my stories about Egypt, which, to say truth, were somewhat thread-bare, were now listened to with more respect than formerly. "The Captain," they said, "had something in him after a'—there were few folk kend see muckle about the Abbey."

With this general approbation waxed my own sense of self-importance, and my feeling of general comfort. I ate with more appetite, I digested with more ease, I lay down at night with joy, and slept sound till morning, when I arose with a sense of busy importance, and bled me to measure, to examine, and to compare the various parts of this interesting structure. I lost all sense and consciousness of certain unpleasant sensations of a non-descript nature, about my head and stomach, to which I had been in the habit of attending, more for the benefit of the village apothecary than my own, for the pure want of something else to think about. I had found out an occupation unwittingly, and was happy because I had something to do. In a word, I had commenced local antiquary, and was not unworthy of the name.

Whilst I was in this pleasing career of busy idleness, far so it might at best be called, it happened that I was one night sitting in my little parlour, adjacent to the closet which my landlady calls my bedroom, in the act of preparing for an early retreat to the realms of Morpheus. Dugdale's *Monasticon*, borrowed from the library at A——, was lying on the table before me, flanked by some excellent Cheshire cheese, (a present, by the way, from an honest London citizen, to whom I had explained the difference betwixt a Gothic and a Saxon arch,) and a glass of Vanderhagen's best ale. Thus armed at all points against my old enemy

Time, I was leisurely and deliciously preparing for bed—now reading a line of old Dugdale—now sipping my ale, or munching my bread and cheese—now undoing the strings at my breeches' knees, or a button or two of my waistcoat, until the village clock should strike ten, before which time I make it a rule never to go to bed. A loud knocking, however, interrupted my ordinary process on this occasion, and the voice of my honest landlord of the George was heard vociferating, "What the deevil, Mrs Grimalaes, the Captain is no in his bed! and a gentleman at our house has ordered a fowl and minced collops, and a bottle of sherry, and has sent to ask him to supper, to tell him all about the Abbey."

"Na," answered Luckie Grimalaes, in the true sleepy tone of a Scottish matron when ten o'clock is going to strike, "he's no in his bed, but I'ae warrant him no gae out at this time o' night to keep folks sitting up waiting for him—the Captain's a decent man."

I plainly perceived this last compliment was made for my hearing, by way both of indicating and of recommending the course of conduct which Mrs Grimalaes desired I should pursue. But I had not been knocked about the world for thirty years and odd, and lived a bluff bachelor all the while, to come home and be put under petticoat government by my landlady. Accordingly I opened my chamber door, and desired my old friend David to walk up stairs.

"Captain," said he, as he entered, "I am as glad to find you up as if I had hooked a twenty pound saumon. There's a gentleman up yonder that will not sleep sound in his bed this blessed night, unless he has the pleasure to drink a glass of wine with you."

"You know, David," I replied, with becoming dignity, "that I cannot with propriety go out to visit strangers at this time of night; or accept of invitations from people of whom I know nothing."

David swore a round oath, and added, "Was ever the like heard of! He has ordered a fowl and egg sauce, a pancake and minced collops, and a bottle of sherry—D'ye think I was come and ask you to go to keep company with any hit English rider, that sups on toasted cheese, and a cheerer of rum-toddy! This is a gentleman every inch of him, and a virtuoso, a clean virtuoso—a sad-coloured stand of claithes, and a wig like the curled back of a mug-ewe. The very first question he

speered was about the auld drawbrig that has been at the bottom of the water these twal score years—I have seen the foundations when we were sticking saumon—And how the deevil suld he ken any thing about the old drawbrig, unless he were a virtuoso!"

David being a virtuoso in his own way, and moreover a landholder and baritor, was a qualified judge of all who frequented his house, and therefore I could not avoid again tying the strings of my knees.

"That's right, Captain," vociferated David, "you twa will be as thick as three in a bed an anen ye forgather. I haena seen the like o' him, my very self since I saw the great Doctor Samuel Johnson on his tower through Scotland, whilk tower is lying in my back-parlour for the amusement of my guests, wi' the twa boards torn aff."

"Then the gentleman is a scholar, David?"

"I'ae uphaud him a scholar," answered David "he has a black coat on, or a brown ane, at orv fate."

"Is he a clergyman?"

"I am thinking no, for he looked after his horse's supper before he spoke o' his ain," replied my host.

"Has he a servant?" demanded I.

"Nae servant," answered David; "but a grand face he has o' his ain, that wad gar any body be willing to serve him that looks upon him."

"And what makes him think of disturbing me."

Ah, David, this has been some of your chattering; you are perpetually bringing your guests on my shoulders, as if it were my business to entertain every man who comes to the George."

"What the deil wad ye hae me do, Captain?" answered mine host; "a gentleman lights down, and asks me in a most earnest manner, what man of sense and learning there is about our town, that can tell him about the antiquities of the place, and specially about the auld Abbey—ye wadna hae me tell the gentleman a lee! and ye ken weel enough there is naeboddy in the town can say a reasonable word about it, be it no yourself, except the bodral, and he is as fou as a piper by this time. So, says I; there's Captain Clutterbuck, that's a very civil gentleman, and has little to do forby telling a' the auld cracks about the Abbey, and dwells just hard by. Then says the gentleman to me, 'Sir,' says he, very civilly, 'have the goodness to step to Captain Clutterbuck with my compliments, and say I am a stranger, who have been led to these parts chiefly by the fame of these Ruins; and that I would call upon him, but the hour is late.' And mair he said—that I have forgotten, but I weel remember it ended—'And, landlord, get a bottle of your best sherry, and supper for twa.'—Ye wadna have had me refuse to do the gentleman's bidding, and me a publican?"

¹ The George was, and is, the principal inn in the village of Kennaquhair, or Melrose. But the landlord of the period was not the same civil and quiet person by whom the inn is now kept. David Kyle, a Melrose proprietor of no little importance, a first-rate person of consequence in whatever belonged to the business of the town, was the original owner and landlord of the inn. Poor David! like many other busy men, took so much care of public affairs, as in some degree to neglect his own. There are persons still alive at Kennaquhair who can recognise him and his peculiarities in the following sketch of mine Host of the George.

² There is more to be said about this old bridge hereafter. See Note C.

"Well, David," said I, "I wish your virtuoso had taken a fitter hour — but as you say he is a gentleman —"

"I've upbraid him that — the order speaks for itself — a bottle of sherry — minced collops and a fowl — that's speaking like a gentleman, I trow! — That's right, Captain, button weel up, the night's raw — but the water's clearing for a' that; we'll be on 't neist night wi' my Lord's boats, and we'll hae ill luck if I dinna send you a kipper to relish your ale at e'en."

In five minutes after this dialogue, I found myself in the parlour of the George, and in the presence of the stranger.

He was a grave personage, about my own age, (which we shall call about fifty,) and really had, as my friend David expressed it, something in his face that inclined men to oblige and to serve him. Yet this expression of authority was not at all of the cast which I have seen in the countenance of a general of brigade, neither was the stranger's dress at all martial. It consisted of a uniform suit of iron-gray clothes, cut in rather an old-fashioned form. His legs were defended with strong leathern gambadoes, which, according to an antiquarian contrivance, opened at the sides, and were secured by steel clasps. His countenance was worn as much by toil and sorrow as by age, for it intimated that he had seen and endured much. His address was singularly pleasing and gentlemanlike, and the apology which he made for disturbing me at such an hour, and in such a manner, was so well and handsomely expressed, that I could not reply otherwise than by declaring my willingness to be of service to him.

"I have been a traveller to-day, sir," said he, "and I would willingly defer the little I have to say till after supper, for which I feel rather more appetized than usual."

We gate down to table, and notwithstanding the stranger's alleged appetite, as well as the gentle preparation of cheese and ale which I had already laid aboard, I really believe that I of the two did the greater honour to my friend David's fowl and minced collops.

When the cloth was removed, and we had each made a tumbler of negus, of that liquor which hosts call Sherry, and guests call Lisbon, I perceived that the stranger seemed pensive, silent, and somewhat embarrassed, as if he had something to communicate which he knew not well how to introduce. To pave the way for him, I spoke of the ancient ruins of the Monastery, and of their history. But, to my great surprise, I found I had met my match with a witness. The stranger not only knew all

that I could tell him, but a great deal more; and, what was still more mortifying, he was able, by reference to dates, charters, and other evidence of facts, that, as Burns says, "down he disputed," to correct many of the vague tales which I had adopted on doose and vulgar tradition, as well as to confute more than one of my favourite theories on the subject of the old monks and their dwellings, which I had sported freely in all the presumption of superior information. And here I cannot but remark, that much of the stranger's arguments and inductions rested upon the authority of Mr Deputy Register of Scotland,* and his lucubrations; a gentleman whose indefatigable research into the national records is like to destroy my trade, and that of all local antiquaries, by substituting truth instead of legend and romance. Alas! would the learned gentleman did but know how difficult it is for us dealers in petty wares of antiquity to —

Pluck from our memories a rooted "legend,"
Raze out the written records of our brain,
Or cleanse our bosoms of that perilous stuff —

and so forth. It would, I am sure, move his pity to think how many old dogs he hath set to learn new tricks, how many venerable parrots he hath taught to sing a new song, how many gray heads he hath addled by vain attempts to exchange their old *Mumpsimus* for his new *Sumpsimus*. But let it pass. *Humana perpesi sumus* — All changes round us, past, present, and to come; that which was history yesterday becomes fable to-day, and the truth of to-day is hatched into a lie by to-morrow.

Finding myself life to be overpowered in the Monastery, which I had hitherto regarded as my citadel, I began, like a skillful general, to evacuate that place of defence, and fight my way through the adjacent country. I had recourse to my acquaintance with the families and antiquities of the neighbourhood, ground on which I thought I might skirmish at large without its being possible for the stranger to meet me with advantage. But I was mistaken.

The man in the iron-gray suit shewed a much more minute knowledge of these particulars than I had the least pretension to. He could tell the very year in which the family of De Haga first settled on their ancient barony.† Not a Thane within reach but he knew his family and connections, how many of his ancestors had fallen by the sword of the English, how many in domestic brawl, and how many by the hand of the executioner for march-treason. "Their castles he was acquainted with from turret to foundation-stone; and as for the miscel-

* Thomas Thomson, Esq., whose well-deserved panegyric ought to be found on another page than one written by an intimate friend of thirty years' standing.

† The family of De Haga, transcribed into Hag, of Bemer-shire, is of the highest antiquity, and is the subject of one of the prophecies of Thomas the Rhymer: —

Heik, heik, watter brids,
Hag shall be Hag of Bemer-shire.

† The nobleman whose hosts are mentioned in the text, is the late kind and amiable Lord Somersville, an intimate friend of the author. David Kyle was a constant and privileged attendant when Lord Somersville had a party for sporting salmon; on such occasions, eighty or a hundred fish were often killed between Gloucester and London-stot.

antiquities scattered about the country, he knew every one of them, from a *crowleek* to a *cairn*, and could give as good an account of each as if he had lived in the time of the Danes or Druids.

I was now in the mortifying predicament of one who suddenly finds himself a scholar when he came to teach, and nothing was left for me but to pick up as much of his conversation as I could, for the benefit of the next company. I told, indeed, Allan Ramsay's story of the Monk and Miller's Wife, in order to retreat with some honour under cover of a parting volley. Here, however, my flank was again turned by the eternal stranger.

"You are pleased to be facetious, sir," said he; "but you cannot be ignorant, that the ludicrous incident you mentioned is the subject of a tale much older than that of Allan Ramsay."

I nodded, unwilling to acknowledge my ignorance, though, in fact, I knew no more what he meant than did one of my friend David's posthorses.

"I do not allude," continued my omniscient companion, "to the curious poem published by Pinkerton from the Maitland Manuscript, called the *Eryars of Berwick*, although it presents a very ruinous and amusing picture of Scottish manners during the reign of James V.; but rather to the Italian novelist, by whom, so far as I know, the story was first printed, although unquestionably he first took his original from some ancient *fabliau*."

"It is not to be doubted," answered I, not very well understanding, however, the proposition to which I gave such unqualified assent.

"Yet," continued my companion, "I question much, had you known my situation and profession, whether you would have pitched upon this precise anecdote for my amusement."

This observation he made in a tone of perfect good-humour. I pricked up my ears at the hint, and answered as politely as I could, that my ignorance of his condition and rank could be the only cause of my having stumbled on any thing disagreeable; and that I was most willing to apologize for my unintentional offence, as soon as I should know wherein it consisted.

"Nay, no offence, sir," he replied; "offence can only exist where it is taken. I have been too long accustomed to more severe and cruel misconstructions, to be offended at a popular jest, though directed at my profession."

"Am I to understand, then," I answered, "that I am speaking with a Catholic clergyman?"

"An unworthy monk of the order of Saint Benedict," said the stranger, "belonging to a community of your own countrymen, long established in France, and scattered unhappily by the events of the Revolution."

It is curious to remark at how little expense of invention successive ages are content to receive amusement. The same story which Ramsay and Dunbar have successively handled, forms also the subject of the modern tale, No Song, no

"Then," said I, "you are a native Scotchman, and from this neighbourhood?"

"Not so," answered the monk; "I am a Scotchman by extraction only, and never was in this neighbourhood during my whole life."

"Never in this neighbourhood, and yet so minutely acquainted with its history, its traditions, and even its external scenery! You surprise me, sir," I replied.

"It is not surprising," he said, "that I should have that sort of local information, when it is considered, that my uncle, an excellent man, as well as a good Scotchman, the head also of our religious community, employed much of his leisure in making me acquainted with these particulars; and that I myself, disgusted with what has been passing around me, have for many years amused myself, by digesting and arranging the various scraps of information which I derived from my worthy relative, and other aged brethren of our order."

"I presume, sir," said I, "though I would by no means intrude the question, that you are now returned to Scotland with a view to settle amongst your countrymen, since the great political catastrophes of our time has reduced your corps?"

"No, sir," replied the Benedictine, "such is not my intention. A European potentate, who still cherishes the Catholic faith, has offered us a retreat within his dominions, where a few of my scattered brethren are already assembled, to pray to God for blessings on their protector, and pardon to their enemies. No one, I believe, will be able to object to us under our new establishment, that the extent of our revenues will be inconsistent with our vows of poverty and abstinence; but, let us strive to be thankful to God, that the snare of temporal abundance is removed from us."

"Many of your convents abroad, sir," said I, "enjoyed very handsome incomes—and yet, allowing for times, I question if any were better provided for than the Monastery of this village. It is said to have possessed nearly two thousand pounds in yearly money-rent, fourteen chalders and nine bolls of wheat, fifty-six chalders five bolls barley, forty-four chalders and ten bolls oats, capons and poultry, butter, salt, carriage and arriage, peas and kine, wool and ale."

"Even too much of all these temporal goods, sir," said my companion, "which, though well intended by the pious donors, served only to make the establishment the envy and the prey of those by whom it was finally devoured."

"In the meanwhile, however," I observed, "the monks had an easy life of it, and, as the old song goes,

—made gods kail
On Fridays when they fasted."

"I understand you, sir," said the Benedictine; "it is difficult, and, as the proverb is, to carry a full cup without spilling. Unquestionably the wealth of the community, as it endangered the safety of

the establishment by exciting the cupidity of others, was also in frequent instances a snare to the brethren themselves. And yet we have seen the revenues of convents expended, not only in acts of beneficence and hospitality to individuals, but in works of general and permanent advantage to the world at large. The noble folio collection of French historians, commenced in 1737, under the inspection and at the expense of the community of Saint Maur, will long show that the revenues of the Benedictines were not always spent in self-indulgence; and that the members of that order did not uniformly slumber in sloth and indolence when they had discharged the formal duties of their rule."

As I knew nothing earthly at the time about the community of Saint Maur and their learned labours, I could only return a mumbling assent to this proposition. I have since seen this noble work in the library of a distinguished family, and I must own I am ashamed to reflect, that in so wealthy a country as ours, a similar digest of our historians should not be undertaken, under the patronage of the noble and the learned, in rivalry of that which the Benedictines of Paris executed at the expense of their own conventual funds.

"I perceive," said the ex-Benedictine, smiling, "that your heretical prejudices are too strong to allow us poor brethren any merit, whether literary or spiritual."

"Far from it, sir," said I; "I assure you I have been much obliged to monks in my time. When I was quartered in a Monastery in Flanders, in the campaign of 1798, I never lived more comfortably in my life. They were jolly fellows the Flemish Canons, and right sorry was I to leave my good quarters, and to know that my honest hosts were to be at the mercy of the Sans-Culottes. But *fortune de la guerre!*"

The poor Benedictine looked down and was silent. "had unwittingly awakened a train of bitter reflections, or rather I had touched somewhat rudely upon a thorn which seldom ceased to vibrate of itself. But he was too much accustomed to this sorrowful train of ideas to suffer it to overcome him. On my part, I hastened to atone for my blunder. "If there was any object of his journey to this country in which I could, with propriety, assist him, I begged to offer him my best services." I own I laid some little emphasis on the words "with propriety," as I felt it would ill become me, a sound Protestant, and a servant of government so far as my half-pay was concerned, to implicate myself in any recruiting which my companion might have undertaken in behalf of foreign seminaries, or in any similar design for the advancement of Popery, which, whether the Pope be actually the old lady of Babylon or no, it did not become me in any manner to advance or countenance.

My new friend hastened to relieve my indeci-

sion. "I was about to request your assistance, sir," he said, "in a matter which cannot but interest you as an antiquary, and a person of research. But I assure you it relates entirely to events and persons removed to the distance of two centuries and a half. I have experienced too much evil from the violent unsettlement of the country in which I was born, to be a rash labourer in the work of innovation in that of my ancestors."

I again assured him of my willingness to assist him in any thing that was not contrary to my allegiance or religion.

"My proposal," he replied, "affects neither. — May God bless the reigning family in Britain! They are not, indeed, of that dynasty to restore which my ancestors struggled and suffered in vain; but the Providence who has conducted his present Majesty to the throne, has given him the virtues necessary to his time — firmness and intrepidity — a true love of his country, and an enlightened view of the dangers by which she is surrounded. — For the religion of these realms, I am contented to hope that the great Power, whose mysterious dispensation has rent them from the bosom of the church, will, in his own good time and manner, restore them to its holy pale. The efforts of an individual obscure and humble as myself, might well retard, but could never advance, a work so mighty."

"May I then inquire, sir," said I, "with what purpose you seek this country?"

Ere my companion replied, he took from his pocket a clasped paper book, about the size of a regimental orderly-book, full, as it seemed, of memoranda; and drawing one of the candles close to him, (for David, as a strong proof of his respect for the stranger, had indulged us with two,) he seemed to peruse the contents very earnestly.

"There is among the ruins of the western end of the Abbey church," said he, looking up to me, yet keeping the memorandum-book half open, and occasionally glancing at it, as if to refresh his memory, "a sort of recess or chapel beneath a broken arch, and in the immediate vicinity of one of those shattered Gothic columns which once supported the magnificent roof, whose fall has now encumbered that part of the building with its ruins."

"I think," said I, "that I know whereabouts you are. Is there not in the side wall of the chapel, or recess which you mention, a large carved stone, bearing a coat of arms, which no one hitherto has been able to decipher?"

"You are right," answered the Benedictine; and again consulting his memorandum, he added, "the arms on the dexter side are those of Glenginning, being a cross parted by a cross-indented and countercharged of the same; and on the sinister three spurrows for those of Arscot; they are two ancient families, now almost extinct in this country — the same part, y. per pale."

"I think," said I, "there is no part of this

ancient structure with which you are not as well acquainted as was the mason who built it. But if your information be correct, he who made out these hearings must have had better eyes than mine."

"His eyes," said the Benedictine, "have long been closed in death; probably when he inspected the monument it was in a more perfect state, or he may have derived his information from the tradition of the place."

"I assure you," said I, "that no such tradition now exists. I have made several reconnaissances among the old people, in hopes to learn something of the armorial bearings, but I never heard of such a circumstance. It seems odd that you should have acquired it in a foreign land."

"These trifling particulars," he replied, "were formerly looked upon as more important, and they were sanctified to the exiles who retained recollection of them, because they related to a place dear indeed to memory, but which their eyes could never again behold. It is possible, in like manner, that on the Potomac or Susquehanna, you may find traditions current concerning places in England, which are utterly forgotten in the neighbourhood where they originated. But to my purpose. In this recess, marked by the armorial bearings, lies buried a treasure, and it is in order to remove it that I have undertaken my present journey."

"A treasure!" echoed I, in astonishment.

"Yes," replied the monk, "an inestimable treasure, for those who know how to use it rightly."

I own my ears did tingle a little at the word treasure, and that a handsome tilbury, with a neat groom in blue and scarlet livery, having a smart cockade on his glazed hat, seemed as it were to glide across the room before my eyes, while a voice, as of a crier, pronounced in my ear, "Captain Clutterbuck's tilbury—drive up." But I resisted the devil, and he fled from me.

"I believe," said I, "all hidden treasure belongs either to the king or the lord of the soil; and as I have served his majesty, I cannot concern myself in any adventure which may have an end in the Court of Exchequer."

"The treasure I seek," said the stranger, smiling, "will not be envied by princes or nobles,—it is simply the heart of an upright man."

"Ah! I understand you," I answered; "some relic, forgotten in the confusion of the Reformation. I know the value which men of your persuasion put upon the bodies and limbs of saints. I have seen the Three Kings of Cologne."

"The relics which I seek, however," said the Benedictine, "are not precisely of that nature. The excellent relative whom I have already mentioned, amused his leisure hours with putting into shape the traditions of his family, particularly some remarkable circumstances which took place about the first breaking out of the schism of the church

in Scotland. He became so much interested in his own labours, that at length he resolved that the heart of one individual, the hero of his tale, should rest no longer in a land of heresy, now deserted by all his kindred. As he knew where it was deposited, he formed the resolution to visit his native country for the purpose of recovering this valued relic. But age, and at length disease, interfered with his resolution, and it was on his deathbed that he charged me to undertake the task in his stead. The various important events which have crowded upon each other, our ruin and our exile, have for many years obliged me to postpone this delegated duty. Why, indeed, transfer the relics of a holy and worthy man to a country, where religion and virtue are become the mockery of the scorner? I have now a home, which I trust may be permanent, if any thing in this earth can be termed so. Thither will I transport the heart of the good father, and beside the shrine, which it shall occupy, I will construct my own grave."

"He must, indeed, have been an excellent man," replied I, "whose memory, at so distant a period, calls forth such strong marks of regard."

"He was, as you justly term him," said the ecclesiastic, "indeed excellent—excellent in his life and doctrine—excellent, above all, in his self-denial and disinterested sacrifice of all that life holds dear to principle and to friendship. But you shall read his history. I shall be happy at once to gratify your curiosity, and to shew my sense of your kindness, if you will have the goodness to procure me the means of accomplishing my object."

I replied to the Benedictine, that, as the rubbish amongst which he proposed to search was no part of the ordinary burial-ground, and as I was on the best terms with the sexton, I had little doubt that I could procure him the means of executing his pious purpose.

With this promise we parted for the night; and on the ensuing morning I made it my business to see the sexton, who, for a small gratuity, readily granted permission of search, on condition, however, that he should be present himself, to see that the stranger removed nothing of intrinsic value.

"To bones, and skulls, and hearts, if he can find any, he shall be welcome," said this guardian of the ruined Monastery, "there's plenty a' about, an he's curious of them; but if there be any picts" (meaning perhaps pyres) "or chalices, or the like of such Popish vessels of gold and silver, dail hae me an I connieve at their being removed."

The sexton also stipulated, that our researches should take place at night, being unwilling to excite observation, or give rise to scandal.

My new acquaintance and I spent the day as became lovers of hoar antiquity. We visited every corner of these magnificent ruins again and again during the forenoon; and, having made a comfortable dinner at David's, we walked in the afternoon to such places in the neighbourhood as

ancient tradition or modern conjecture had rendered mark-worthy. Night found us in the interior of the ruins, attended by the sexton, who carried a dark lantern, and stumbling alternately over the graves of the dead, and the fragments of that architecture, "which they doubtless trusted would have canopied their bones till doomsday."

I am by no means particularly superstitious, and yet there was that in the present service which I did not very much like. There was something awful in the resolution of disturbing, at such an hour, and in such a place, the still and mute sanctity of the grave. My companions were free from this impression—the stranger from his energetic desire to execute the purpose for which he came—and the sexton from habitual indifference. We soon stood in the aisle, which, by the account of the Benedictine, contained the bones of the family of Glendinning, and were busily employed in removing the rubbish from a corner which the stranger pointed out. If a half-pay Captain could have represented an ancient Border-knight, or an ex-Benedictine of the nineteenth century a wizard monk of the sixteenth, we might have aptly enough personified the search after Michael Scott's lamp and book of magic power. But the sexton would have been *de trop* in the group.¹

Ere the stranger, assisted by the sexton in his task, had been long at work, they came to some hewn stones, which seemed to have made part of a small shrine, though now displaced and destroyed.

"Let us remove these with caution, my friend," said the stranger, "lest we injure that which I come to seek."

"They are prime stones," said the sexton, "picked free every one of them;—warer than the best wad never serve the monks, I see warrant."

A minute after he had made this observation, he exclaimed, "I hae fund something now that stands again the spade, as if it were neither earth nor stane."

The stranger stooped eagerly to assist him.

"Na, na, halli o' my ain," said the sexton; "nae halves or quarters."—and he lifted from amongst the ruins a small leaden box.

"You will be disappointed, my friend," said the Benedictine, "if you expect any thing there but the mouldering dust of a human heart, closed in an inner case of porphyry."

I interrupted as a neutral party, and taking the box from the sexton, reminded him, that if there

were treasure concealed in it, still it could not become the property of the finder. I then proposed, that as the place was too dark to examine the contents of the leaden casket, we should adjourn to David's, where we might have the advantage of light and fire while carrying on our investigation. The stranger requested us to go before, assuring us that he would follow in a few minutes.

I fancy, that old Mattocks suspected these few minutes might be employed in effecting farther discoveries amongst the tombs, for he glided back through a side-aisle to watch the Benedictine's motions, but presently returned, and told me in a whisper, that "the gentleman was on his knees among the cauld stanes, praying like ony saint."

I stole back, and beheld the old man actually employed as Mattocks had informed me. The language seemed to be Latin; and as the whispered, yet solemn accent, glided away through the ruined aisles, I could not help reflecting how long it was since they had heard the forms of that religion; for the exercise of which they had been reared at such cost of time, taste, labour, and expense. "Come away, come away," said I; "let us leave him to himself, Mattocks; this is no business of ours."

"My certes, no, Captain," said Mattocks; "ne'ertheless, it winna be amiss to keep an ee on him. My father, rest his soul, was a horse-couper, and used to say he never was cheated in a naig in his life, saving by a west-country whig frae Kilmarnock, that said a grace over a dram o' whisky. But this gentleman will be a Roman, I see warrant!"

"You are perfectly right in that, Saunders," said I.

"Ay, I have seen twa or three of their priests that were chased over here some score o' years syne. They just danced like mad when they looked on the friars' heads, and the nuns' heads, in the cloister yonder; they took to them like auld acquaintance like.—Od, he is not stirring yet, mair than he were a through-stane! I never kend a Roman, to say kend him, but aye—mair by token, he was the only aye in the town to ken—and that was auld Jock of the Pend. It wad ha been lang ere ye fand Jock praying in the Abbey in a thick night, wi' his knees on a cauld stane. Jock likt a kirk wi' a chimley in't. Mony a merry play I hae had wi' him down at the inn yonder; and, when he died, decently I wad hae carded him; but, or I gat his grave weel bowld, some of the quality, that were o' his ain unhappy persuasion, had the corpses whirled away up the water, and buried him after their ain pleasure, doubtless—theyland best. I wad hae made nae great charge. I wadna hae excused Johnnie, dead or alive.—Stay, ere—the strange gentleman is coming."

"Hold the lantern to make him, Mattocks," said I.—"This is rough walking, sir."

¹ This is one of those passages which must now read awkwardly, since every one knows that the Novelist and the author of the *Lay of the Minstrel* is the same person. But before the avowal was made, the author was forced into this and similar allusions against good taste, to resist an argument, often repeated, that there was something very mysterious in the Author of *Waverley*'s manner concerning the *Walter Scott*, an author sufficiently well-known at least. I had a great mind to remove the passages from this edition, but the more candid way is to explain how they came there.

"Yes," replied the Benedictine; "I may say with a poet, who is doubtless familiar to you——"
I should be surprised if he were, thought I internally.

The stranger continued :

"Saint Francis be my speed ! how off to-right
Have my old feet stumbled at graves !"

"We are now clear of the churchyard," said I, "and have but a short walk to David's, where I hope we shall find a cheerful fire to enliven us after our night's work."

We entered, accordingly, the little parlour, into which Mattocks was also about to push himself with sufficient offrontery, when David, with a most astounding oath, expelled him by head and shoulders, d—ning his curiosity, that would not let gentlemen be private in their own inn. Apparently mine host considered his own presence as no intrusion, for he crowded up to the table on which I had laid down the leaden box. It was frail and wasted, as might be guessed, from having lain so many years in the ground. On opening it, we found deposited within, a case made of porphyry, as the stranger had announced to us.

"I fancy," he said, "gentlemen, your curiosity will not be satisfied,—perhaps I should say that your suspicions will not be removed,—unless 'I undo this casket; yet it only contains the mouldering remains of a heart, once the seat of the noblest thoughts."

He undid the box with great caution; but the shrivelled substance which it contained bore now no resemblance to what it might once have been, the means used having been apparently unequal to preserve its shape and colour, although they were adequate to prevent its total decay. We were quite satisfied, notwithstanding, that it was, what the stranger asserted, the remains of a human heart; and David readily promised his influence in the village, which was almost co-ordinate with that of the baillie himself, to silence all idle rumours. He was, moreover, pleased to favour us with his company to supper; and having taken the lion's share of two bottles of sherry, he not only sanctioned with his plenary authority the stranger's removal of the heart, but, I believe, would have authorized the removal of the Abbey itself, were it not that it happens considerably to advantage the worthy publican's own custom.

The object of the Benedictine's visit to the land of his forefathers being now accomplished, he announced his intention of leaving us early in the ensuing day, but requested my company to breakfast with him before his departure. I came accordingly, and when we had finished our morning's meal, the priest took me apart, and pulling from his pocket a large bundle of papers, he put them into my hands. "These," said he, "Captain Clutterbuck, our genuine Memoirs of the sixteenth century, and exhibit in a singular, and, as I think, an interesting point of view, the manners of that period. I am

induced to believe that their publication will not be an unacceptable present to the British public; and willingly make over to you any profit that may accrue from such a transaction."

I stared a little at this announcement, and observed, that the hand seemed too modern for the date he assigned to the manuscript.

"Do not mistake me, sir," said the Benedictine; "I did not mean to say the Memoirs were written in the sixteenth century, but only, that they were compiled from authentic materials of that period, but written in the taste and language of the present day. My uncle commenced this book; and I partly to improve my habit of English composition, partly to divert melancholy thoughts, amused my leisure hours with continuing and concluding it. You will see the period of the story where my uncle leaves off his narrative, and I commence mine. In fact, they relate in a great measure to different persons, as well as to a different period.

Retaining this paper in my hand, I proceeded to state to him my doubts, whether, as a good Protestant, I could undertake or superintend a publication written probably in the spirit of Popery.

"You will find," he said, "no matter of controversy in these sheets, nor any sentiments stated, with which, I trust, the good in all persuasions will not be willing to join. I remembered I was writing for a land unhappily divided from the Catholic faith; and I have taken care to say nothing which, justly interpreted, could give ground for accusing me of partiality. But if, upon collating my narrative with the proofs to which I refer you—for you will find copies of many of the original papers in that parcel—you are of opinion that I have been partial to my own faith, I freely give you leave to correct my errors in that respect. I own, however, I am not conscious of this defect, and have rather to fear that the Catholics may be of opinion, that I have mentioned circumstances respecting the decay of discipline which preceded, and partly occasioned, the great schism, called by you the Reformation, over which I ought to have drawn a veil. And indeed, this is one reason why I choose the papers should appear in a foreign land, and pass to the press through the hands of a stranger."

"To this I had nothing to reply, unless to object my own incompetency to the task the good father was desirous to impose upon me. On this subject he was pleased to say more, I fear, than his knowledge of me fully warranted—more, at any rate, than my modesty will permit me to record. At length he ended, with advising me, if I continued to feel the diffidence which I stated, to apply to some veteran of literature, whose experience might supply my deficiencies. Upon these terms we parted, with mutual expressions of regard, and I have never since heard of him."

After several attempts to peruse the quires of paper thus singularly conferred on me, in which I was interrupted by the most insupportable fits of

yawning, I at length, in a sort of despair, communi-
cated them to our village club, from whom they
found a more favourable reception than the unlucky
conformation of my nerves had been able to afford
them. They unanimously pronounced the work to
be exceedingly good, and assured me I would be
guilty of the greatest possible injury to our flour-
ishing village, if I should suppress what threw such
an interesting and radiant light upon the history
of the ancient Monastery of Saint Mary.

At length, by dint of listening to their opinion, I
became dubious of my own; and, indeed, when I
heard passages read forth by the sonorous voice of
our worthy pastor, I was scarce more tired than
I have felt myself at some of his own sermons.
Such, and so great is the difference betwixt read-
ing a thing one's self, making toilsome way through
all the difficulties of manuscript, and, as the man
says in the play, "having the same read to you;"
— it is positively like being wafted over a creek
in a boat, or wading through it off your feet, with
the mud up to your knees. Still, however, there
remained the great difficulty of finding some one
who could act as editor, corrector at once of the
press and of the language, which, according to the
schoolmaster, was absolutely necessary.

Since the trees walked forth to choose them-
selves a king, never was an honour so handled
about. The parson would not leave the quiet
of his chimney-corner—the bailie pleaded the dig-
nity of his situation, and the approach of the great
annual fair, as reasons against going to Edinburgh
to make arrangements for printing the Benedic-
tine's manuscript. The schoolmaster alone seemed
of malleable stuff; and, desirous perhaps of emulat-
ing the fame of Jedediah Cleishbotham, evinced a
wish to undertake this momentous commission.

But a remonstrance from three opulent farmers,
whose sons he had at bed, board, and schooling, for
twenty pounds per annum a-head, came like a frost
over the blossoms of his literary ambition, and he
was compelled to decline the service.

In these circumstances, sir, I apply to you, by
the advice of our little council of war, nothing
doubting you will not be disinclined to take the
duty upon you, as it is much connected with that
in which you have distinguished yourself. What
I request is, that you will review, or rather revise
and correct, the enclosed packet, and prepare it for
the press, by such alterations, additions, and cor-
tailments, as you think necessary. Forgive my
hinting to you, that the deepest well may be ex-
hausted,—the best corps of grenadiers, as our old
general of brigade expressed himself, may be used
up. A few hints can do you no harm; and, for
the prize-money, let the battle be first won, and it
shall be parted at the drum-head. I hope you will
take nothing amiss that I have said. I am a plain
soldier, and little accustomed to compliments. I
may add, that I should be well contented to march
in the front with you—that is, to put my name
with yours on the title-page. I have the honour
to be

SIR,

Your unknown humble servant,

CUTHBERT CLUTTERBUCK.

VILLAGE OF KENNAQUHAIK,
— of April, 18—

For the Author of "Waverley," &c.
care of Mr John Ballantyne,
Hanover Street, Edinburgh.

ANSWER BY "THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY;

TO THE FOREGOING

LETTER FROM CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK.

DEAR CAPTAIN,

Do not admire, that, notwithstanding the distance
and ceremony of your address, I return an answer
in the terms of familiarity. The truth is, your
origin and native country are better known to me
than even to yourself. You derive your respectable
parentage, if I am not greatly mistaken, from a
land which has afforded much pleasure, as well as
profit, to those who have traded to it successfully.
— I mean that part of the terra incognita which is

called the province of Utopia. Its productions,
though censured by many (and some who use tea
and tobacco without scruple) as idle and unsub-
stantial luxuries, have nevertheless, like many other
luxuries, a general acceptance, and are secretly
enjoyed even by those who express the greatest
scorn and dislike of them in public. The dram-
drinker is often the first to be shocked at the smell
of spirits—it is not unusual to hear old maiden
ladies declaim against scandal—the private book-

cases of some grave-seeming men would not brook decent eyes—and many, I say not of the wise and learned, but of those most anxious to seem such, when the spring-lock of their library is drawn, their velvet cap pulled over their ears, their feet insinuated into their turkey slippers, are to be found, were their retreats suddenly intruded upon, busily engaged with the last new novel.

I have said: the truly wise and learned disdain these shifts, and will open the said novel as avowedly as they would the lid of their snuff-box. I will only quote one instance, though I know a hundred. Did you know the celebrated Watt of Birmingham, Captain Clutterbuck? I believe not, though, from what I am about to state, he would not have failed to have sought an acquaintance with you. It was only once my fortune to meet him, whether in body or in spirit it matters not. 'There were assembled about half-a-score of our Northern Lights, who had amongst them, Heaven knows how, a well known character of your country, Jedediah Cleishbotham. This worthy person, having come to Edinburgh during the Christmas vacation, had become a sort of lion in the place, and was led in leash from house to house along with the guards, the stone-eater, and other amusements of the season, which "exhibited their unparalleled feats to private family-parties, if required." Amidst this company stood Mr Watt, the man whose genius discovered the means of multiplying out national resources to a degree perhaps even beyond his own stupendous powers of calculation and combination; bringing the treasures of the abyss to the summit of the earth—giving the feeble arm of man the momentum of an Afrite—commanding manufactures to arise, as the rod of the prophet produced water in the desert—affording the means of dispensing with that time and tide which wait for no man, and of sailing without that wind which defied the commands and threats of Xerxes himself! This potent commander of the elements—this abridger of time and space—this magician, whose cloudy machinery has produced a change on the world, the effects of which, extraordinary as they are, are perhaps only now beginning to be felt—was not only the most profound man of science, the most successful combiner of powers and calculator of numbers as adapted to practical purposes,—was not only one of the most generally well-informed,—but one of the best and kindest of human beings.

There he stood, surrounded by the little band I have mentioned of Northern literati, men not less tenacious, generally speaking, of their own fame and their own opinions, than the national regiments are supposed to be jealous of the high cha-

racter which they have won upon service. Me thinks I yet see and hear what I shall never see or hear again. 'In his eighty-fifth year, the alert, kind, benevolent old man, had his attention alive to every one's question, his information at every one's command.

His talents and fancy overflowed on every subject. One gentleman was a deep philologist,—he talked with him on the origin of the alphabet as if he had been coeval with Cadmus; another a celebrated critic,—you would have said the old man had studied political economy and belles-lettres all his life,—of science it is unnecessary to speak, it was his own distinguished walk. And yet, Captain Clutterbuck, when he spoke with your countryman Jedediah Cleishbotham, you would have sworn he had been coeval with Claverhoe and Burley, with the persecutors and persecuted, and could number every shot the dragoons had fired at the fugitive Covenanters. In fact, we discovered, that no novel of the least celebrity escaped his perusal, and that the gifted man of science was as much addicted to the productions of your native country, (the land of Utopia aforesaid,) in other words, as shameless and obstinate a peruser of novels, as if he had been a very milliner's apprentice of eighteen. I know little apology for troubling you with these things, excepting the desire to commemorate a delightful evening, and a wish to encourage you to shake off that modest diffidence which makes you afraid of being supposed connected with the fairy-land of delusive fiction. I will requite your tag of verse, from Horace himself, with a paraphrase for your own use, my dear Captain, and for that of your country club, excepting in reverence the clergyman and schoolmaster:—

Ne sit ancilla tibi amor pudor, &c.
Take thou no scorn,
Of fiction born,
Fair fiction's muse to woo:
Old Homer's theme
Was but a dream,
Himself a fiction too.

Having told you your country, I must next, my dear Captain Clutterbuck, make free to mention your own immediate descent. You are not to suppose your land of prodigies so little known to us as the careful concealment of your origin would seem to imply. But you have it in common with many of your country, studiously and anxiously to hide any connection with it. There is this difference, indeed, betwixt your countrymen and those of our more material world, that many of the most estimable of them, such as an old Highland gentleman called Ossian, a monk of Bristol called Rowley and others, are inclined to gaze themselves off as denizens of the land of reality, whereas most of our fellow-citizens who deny their country are such as that country would be very willing to disclaim. The special circumstances you mention relating to your life and services, impose not upon us. We know

Probably the ingenious author alludes to the national defect:

*The thing said ill,
But the what said no.*

Our characteristick (who is also a land-surveyor) thinks this whole passage refers to Mr Watt's improvements on the steam-engine.—*Not by Captain Clutterbuck.*

the versatility of the unsubstantial species to which you belong permits them to assume all manner of disguises; we have seen them apparelled in the caftan of a Persian, and the silken robe of a Chinese,¹ and are prepared to suspect their real character under every disguise. But how can we be ignorant of your country and manners, or deceived by the evasion of its inhabitants, when the voyages of discovery which have been made to it rival in number those recorded by Purchas or by Hackluyt?² And to shew the skill and perseverance of your navigators and travellers, we have only to name Sindbad, Aboulfouaris, and Robinson Crusoe. These were the men for discoveries. Could we have sent Captain Greenland to look out for the north-west passage, or Peter Wilkins to examine Baffin's Bay, what discoveries might we not have expected! But there are feats, and these both numerous and extraordinary, performed by the inhabitants of your country, which we read without once attempting to emulate.

I wander from my purpose, which was to assure you, that I know you as well as the mother who did not bear you, for MacDuff's peculiarity sticks to your whole race. You are not born of woman, unless, indeed, in that figurative sense, in which the celebrated Maria Edgeworth may, in her state of single blessedness, be termed mother of the finest family in England. You belong, sir, to the Editors of the land of Utopia, a sort of persons for whom I have the highest esteem. How is it possible it should be otherwise, when you reckon among your corporation the sage Cid Hamet Benengeli, the short-faced president of the Spectator's Club, poor Ben Siltou, and many others, who have acted as gentlemen-usurers to works which have cheered our heaviest, and added wings to our lightest hours!

What I have remarked as peculiar to Editors of the class in which I venture to enrol you, is the happy combination of fortuitous circumstances, which usually put you in possession of the works which you have the goodness to bring into public notice. One walks on the sea-shore, and a wave casts on land a small cylindrical trunk or casket, containing a manuscript much damaged with seawater, which is with difficulty deciphered, and so forth.³ Another steps into a chandler's shop, to purchase a pound of butter, and, behold! the waste-paper on which it is laid is the manuscript of a cabalist.⁴ A third is so fortunate as to obtain from a woman who lets lodgings, the curious contents of an antique bureau, the property of a deceased lodger.⁵ All these are certainly possible occurrences; but I know not how, they seldom occur to any Editors save those of your country. At least I can answer for myself, that in my solitary

walks by the sea, I never saw it cast ashore any thing but dulce and tangle, and now and then a deceased star-fish; my landlady never presented me with any manuscript save her cursed bill; and the most interesting of my discoveries in the way of waste-paper, was finding a favourite passage of one of my own novels wrapt round an ounce of snuff.⁶ No, Captain, the funds from which I have drawn my power of amusing the public, have been bought otherwise than by fortuitous adventure. I have buried myself in libraries, to extract from the nonsense of ancient days new nonsense of my own. I have turned over volumes, which, from the pot-hooks I was obliged to decipher, might have been the cabalistic manuscripts of Cornelius Agrippa, although I never saw "the door open and the devil come in."⁷ But all the domestic inhabitants of the libraries were disturbed by the vehemence of my studies;—

From my research the boldest spider fled,
And moths, retreating, trembled as I read.

From this learned sepulchre I emerged like the Magician in the Persian Tales, from his twelve-month's residence in the mountain, not ~~but~~ him to soar over the heads of the multitude, but to mingle in the crowd, and to elbow amongst the throng, making my way from the highest society to the lowest, undergoing the scorn, or, what is harder to brook, the patronizing condescension of the one, and enduring the vulgar familiarity of the other,—and all, you will say, for what!—to collect materials for one of those manuscripts with which mere chance so often accommodates your countrymen; in other words, to write a successful novel.—"O Athenians, how hard we labour to deserve your praise!"

I might stop here, my dear Clutterbuck; it would have a touching effect, and the air of proper deference to our dear Public. But I will not be false with you,—(though falsehood is—excuse the observation—the current coin of your country,) the truth is, I have studied and lived for the purpose of gratifying my own curiosity, and passing my own time; and though the result has been, that, in one shape or other, I have been frequently before the Public, perhaps more frequently than prudence warranted, yet I cannot claim from them the favour due to those who have dedicated their ease and leisure to the improvement and entertainment of others.

Having communicated thus freely with you, my dear Captain, it follows, of course, that I will gratefully accept of your communication, which, as your Benedictine observed, divides itself both by subject, manner, and age, into two parts. But I am sorry I cannot gratify your literary ambition, by suffering your name to appear upon the title-page; and I will candidly tell you the reason.

The Editors of your country are of such a soft-

¹ See *The Persian Letters*, and *The Citizen of the World*.

² See *Les Voyages Imaginaires*.

³ See the *History of Automatons*.

⁴ *Adventures of a Guinea*.

⁵ *Adventures of an Atom*.

⁶ See *Bentley's Memoir on the Young Man who read in a Conjuror's Books*.

and passive disposition, that they have frequently done themselves great disgrace, by giving up the conductors who first brought them into public notice and public favour, and suffering their names to be used by those quacks and impostors who live upon the ideas of others. Thus I shame to tell how the sage Cid Hamet Benengeli was induced by one Juan Avellaneda to play the Turk with the ingenious Miguel Cervantes, and to publish a Second Part of the adventures of his hero the renowned Don Quixote, without the knowledge or co-operation of his principal aforesaid. It is true, the Arabian sage returned to his allegiance, and thereafter composed a genuine continuation of the Knight of La Mancha, in which the said Avellaneda of Tordesillas is severely chastised. For in this you pseudo-editors resemble the juggler's disciplined ape, to which a sly old Scotsman likened James I., "if you have Jackoo in your hand, you can make him bite me; if I have Jackoo in my hand, I can make him bite you." Yet, notwithstanding the *amende honorable* thus made by Cid Hamet Benengeli, his temporary defection did not the less occasion the decease of the ingenious Hidalgo Don Quixote, if he can be said to die, whose memory is immortal. Cervantes¹ put him to death, lest he should again fall into bad hands. Awful, yet just consequence of Cid Hamet's defection!

To quote a more modern and much less important instance. I am sorry to observe my old acquaintance Jedediah Cloishbotham has misbehaved himself so far as to desert his original patron, and set up for himself. I am afraid the poor pedagogue will make little by his new allies, unless the pleasure of entertaining the public, and, for aught I know, the gentlemen of the long robe, with disputes about his identity.² Observe, therefore, Captain Clutterbuck, that, wise by those great examples, I receive you as a partner, but a sleeping partner only. As I give you no title to employ or

use the firm of the copartnery we are about to form, I will announce my property in my title-page, and put my own mark on my own chattels, which the attorney tells me it will be a crime to counterfeit, as much as it would to imitate the autograph of any other empire—a crime amounting, as advertisements upon little vials assure to us, to nothing short of felony. If, therefore, my dear friend, your name should hereafter appear in any title-page without mine, readers will know what to think of you. I scorn to use either arguments or threats; but you cannot but be sensible, that, as you owe your literary existence to me on the one hand, so, on the other, your very all is at my disposal. I can at pleasure cut off your annuity, strike your name from the half-pay establishment, nay, actually put you to death, without being answerable to any one. These are plain words to a gentleman who has served during the whole war; but, I am aware, you will take nothing amiss at my hands.

And now, my good sir, let us address ourselves to our task, and arrange as we best can the manuscript of your Benedicite, so as to suit the taste of this critical age. You will find I have made very liberal use of his permission, to alter whatever seemed too favourable to the Church of Rome, which I abominate, were it but for her fasts and penances.

Our reader is doubtless impatient, and we must own, with John Bunyan,

We have too long detain'd him in the porch,
And kept him from the sunshine with a torch

Adieu, therefore, my dear Captain—remember me respectfully to the parson, the schoolmaster, and the battle, and all friends of the happy club in the village of Kennaquhair. I have never seen, and never shall see, one of their faces; and notwithstanding, I believe that as yet I am better acquainted with them than any other man who lives.—I shall soon introduce you to my second friend, Mr. John Ballantyne of Trinity Grove, whom you will find warm from his match at single-stick with a brother Publisher.³ Peace to their differences! It is a wrathful trade, and the *irritabile genus* comprehends the bookselling as well as the book-writing species.—Once more adieu!

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.

¹ I am since more correctly informed, that Mr. Cloishbotham died some months since at Ganderclough, and that the person assuming his name is an impostor. The real Jedediah made a most Christian and edifying end; and, as I am credibly informed, having sent for a Cameroonian clergyman when he was in extremis, was so fortunate as to convince the good man, that, after all, he had no wish to bring down on the scattered remnant of Mountain folk, "the bonnets of Bonny Dundee." Had that the speculators in print and paper will not allow a good man to rest quiet in his grave.

² This note, and the passages in the text, were occasioned by a London bookseller having printed, as a speculation, an additional collection of Tales of My Landlord, which was not so fortunate as to succeed in passing on the world as genuine.

³ In consequence of the pseudo Tales of My Landlord printed in London, as already mentioned, the late Mr. John Ballantyne, the author's publisher, had a controversy with the intruding bibliophile, each insisting that his Jedediah Cloishbotham was the real Simon Pure.

The Monastery.

CHAPTER I.

O ay! the Monks, the Monks they did the mischief!
 Theirs all the goodness, all the superstition
 Of a most gross and superstitious age—
 May He be praised that sent the healthful tempest
 And scatter'd all these pestilential vapours?
 But that we owed them all to yonder Harlot
 Throned on the seven hills with her cup of gold,
 I will as soon believe, with kind Sir Roger,
 That old Moll White took wing with cat and broomstick,
 And raised the last night's thunder.

— Old Play.

THE village described in the Benedictine's manuscript by the name of Kennaquhair, bears the same Celtic termination which occurs in Traquhair, Caquhair, and other compounds. The learned Chalmers derives this word Quhair, from the winding course of a stream; a definition which coincides, in a remarkable degree, with the serpentine turns of the river Tweed near the village of which we speak. It has been long famous for the splendid Monastery of Saint Mary, founded by David the First of Scotland, in whose reign were formed, in the same county, the no less splendid establishments of Melrose, Jedburgh, and Kelso. The donations of land with which the King endowed these wealthy fraternities procured him from the Monkish historians the epithet of Saint, and from one of his impoverished descendants the splenetic censure, "that he had been a sore saint for the Crown."

It seems probable, notwithstanding, that David, who was a wise as well as a pious monarch, was not moved solely by religious motives to those great acts of munificence to the church, but annexed political views to his pious generosity. His possessions in Northumberland and Cumberland became precarious after the loss of the Battle of the Standard; and since the comparatively fertile valley of Teviotdale was likely to become the frontier of his kingdom, it is probable he wished to secure at least a part of these valuable possessions by placing them in the hands of the monks, whose property was for a long time respected, even amidst the rage of a frontier war. In this manner alone had the King some chance of ensuring protection and security to the cultivators of the soil; and, in fact, for several ages the possessions of these Abbeys were each a sort of Goshen, enjoying the calm light of peace and immunity, while the rest of the country, occupied by wild clans and marauding barons, was not dark some of confusion, blood, and unrelenting outrage.

But these immunities did not continue down to the union of the crowns. Long before that period the wars between England and Scotland had lost their original character of international hostilities,

and had become on the part of the English a struggle for subjugation, on that of the Scots a desperate and infuriated defence of their liberties. This introduced on both sides a degree of fury and animosity unknown to the earlier period of their history; and as religious scruples soon gave way to national hatred spurred by a love of plunder, the patrimony of the Church was no longer sacred from incursions on either side. Still, however, the tenants and vassals of the great Abbeys had many advantages over those of the lay barons, who were harassed by constant military duty, until they became desperate, and lost all relish for the arts of peace. The vassals of the church, on the other hand, were only liable to be called to arms on general occasions, and at other times were permitted in comparative quiet to possess their farms and fens.¹ They of course exhibited superior skill in every thing that related to the cultivation of the soil, and were therefore both wealthier and better informed than the military retainers of the restless chiefs and nobles in their neighbourhood.

The residence of these church vassals was usually in a small village or hamlet, where, for the sake of mutual aid and protection, some thirty or forty families dwelt together. This was called the Town, and the land belonging to the various families by whom the Town was inhabited, was called the Township. They usually possessed the land in common, though in various proportions, according to their several grants. The part of the Township properly arable, and kept as such continually under the plough, was called *in-field*. Here the use of quantities of manure supplied in some degree the exhaustion of the soil, and the fens raised tolerable oats and bear,² usually sowed on alternate ridges, on which the labour of the whole community was bestowed without distinction, the produce being divided after harvest, agreeably to their respective interests.

There was, besides, *out-field* land, from which it was thought possible to extract a crop now and then, after which it was abandoned to the "skely influences," until the exhausted powers of vegetation were restored. These out-field spots were selected by any tenant at his own choice, amongst the sheep-walks and hills which were always annexed to the Township, to serve as pasture for the community.

¹ Small possessions conferred upon vassals and their heirs, held for a small quit-rent, or a moderate proportion of the produce. This was a favourite manner, by which the churches peopled the patrimony of their convents; and many donations of such *tenures*, as they are called, are still to be found in possession of their family descendants in the neighbourhood of the great Monasteries of Scotland.
² Or *hags*, a Scotch kind of barley.

The trouble of cultivating these patches of out-field and the precarious chance that the crop would pay the labour, were considered as giving a right to any fœnar, who chose to undertake the adventure, to the produce which might result from it.

There remained the pasturage of extensive moors, where the valleys often afforded good grass, and upon which the whole cattle belonging to the community fed indiscriminately during the summer, under the charge of the Town-hord, who regularly drove them out to pasture in the morning, and brought them back at night, without which precaution they would have fallen a speedy prey to some of the Snatchers in the neighbourhood. These are things to make modern agriculturists hold up their hands and stare; but the same mode of cultivation is not yet entirely in desuetude in some distant parts of North Britain, and may be witherssed in full force and exercise in the Zeland Archipelago.

The habitations of the church-fœnars were not so primitive than their agriculture. In each village or Town were several small towers, having battlements projecting over the side-walls, and usually an advanced angle or two with shot-holes for flanking the door-way, which was always defended by a strong door of oak, studded with nails, and often by an exterior grated door of iron. These snail-shell-houses were ordinarily inhabited by the principal fœnars and their families; but, upon the alarm of approaching danger, the whole inhabitants thronged from their own miserable cottages, which were situated around, to garrison these points of defense. It was then no easy matter for a hostile party to penetrate into the village, for the men were habituated to the use of bows and fire-arms, and the towers being generally so placed, that the discharge from one crossed that of another, it was impossible to assault any of them individually.

The interior of these houses was usually sufficiently wretched, for it would have been folly to have furnished them in a manner which could excite the avarice of their lawless neighbours. Yet the families themselves exhibited in their appearance a degree of comfort, information, and independence, which could hardly have been expected. Their in-field supplied them with bread and home-brewed ale, their herds and flocks with beef and mutton, (the extravagance of killing lambs or calves was never thought of.) Each family killed a mart, or fat bullock, in November, which was salted up for winter use, to which the goodwife could, upon great occasions, add a dish of pigeons or a fat capon, — the ill-cultivated garden afforded “lang-cals,” — and the river gave salmon to serve as a relish during the season of Lent.

Of fuel they had plenty, for the bogs afforded turf; and the remains of the abused woods continued to give them logs for burning, as well as timber for the usual domestic purposes. In addition to these comforts, the Goodman would now and then rally forth to the greenwood, and mark down a buck of season with his gun or his cross-bow; and the Father Confessor seldom refused him absolution for the trespass if duly invited to take his share of the smoking haunch. Some, still bolder, made, either with their own domestics, or by associating themselves with the moss-troopers, in the language of sheepherds, “a start and overtook” the golden ornaments and silken head-dresses by the families of one of two families of

note, were vividously traced by their neighbours to such successful excursions. This, however, was a more inexpressible crime in the eyes of the Abbot and Community of Saint Mary's, than the borrowing one of the “gude king's deer,” and they failed not to discomfitance and punish, by every means in their power, offences which were sure to lead to severe retaliation upon the property of the church, and which tended to alter the character of their peaceful vassalage.

As for the information possessed by those dependents of the Abbacies, they might have been truly said to be better fed than taught, even though their fare had been worse than it was. Still, however, they enjoyed opportunities of knowledge from which others were excluded. The Monks were in general well acquainted with their vassals and tenants, and familiar in the families of the better class among them, where they were sure to be received with the respect due to their twofold character of spiritual father and secular landlord. Thus it often happened, when a boy displayed talents and inclination for study, one of the brethren, with a view to his being bred to the church, or out of good-nature, in order to pass away his own idle time, if he had no better motive, initiated him into the mysteries of reading and writing, and imparted to him such other knowledge as he himself possessed. And the heads of these allied families, having more time for reflection, and more skill, as well as stronger motives for improving their small properties, bore amongst their neighbours the character of shrewd, intelligent men, who claimed respect on account of their comparative wealth, even while they were despised for a less warlike and enterprising turn than the other Borderers. They lived as much as they well could amongst themselves, avoiding the company of others, and dreading nothing more than to be involved in the deadly feuds and ceaseless contentions of the secular land-holders.

Such is a general picture of these communities. During the fatal wars in the commencement of Queen Mary's reign, they had suffered dreadfully by the hostile invasions. For the English, now a Protestant people, were so far from sparing the church-lands, that they forayed them with more unrelenting severity than even the possessions of the laity. But the peace of 1550 had restored some degree of tranquillity to these distracted and harassed regions, and matters began again gradually to settle upon their former footing. The monks repaired their ravaged shrines — the fœnar again roofed his small fortalice which the enemy had ruined — the poor labourer rebuilt his cottage — an easy task, where a few sods, stones, and some pieces of wood from the next copse, furnished all the materials necessary. The cattle, lastly, were driven out of the wastes and thickets in which the remnant of them had been secreted; and the mighty hall moved at the head of his seraglio and their followers, to take possession of their wonted pastures. There ensued peace and quiet, the state of the age and nation considered, to the Monastery of Saint Mary, and its dependents, for several tranquil years.

CHAPTER II.

In yon lone vale his early youth was led,
 Not solitary then — the temple-bells
 Of full Alcock often waiked its windings,
 From where the brook joins the majestic river.
 To the wild northern bog, the carlew's haunt,
 Where oases foeth its first and feeble streamlet.
Old Play.

We have said, that most of the feuars dwelt in the village belonging to their townships. This was not, however, universally the case. A lonely tower, to which the reader must now be introduced, was at least one exception to the general rule.

It was of small dimensions, yet larger than those which occurred in the village, as intimating that, in case of assault, the proprietor would have to rely upon his own unassisted strength. Two or three miserable huts, at the foot of the fortalice, held the bondsmen and tenants of the feuar. The site was a beautiful green knoll, which started up suddenly in the very throat of a wild and narrow glen, and which, being surrounded, except on one side, by the winding of a small stream, afforded a position of considerable strength.

But the great security of Glendearg, for so the place was called, lay in its secluded, and almost hidden situation. To reach the tower, it was necessary to travel three miles up the glen, crossing about twenty times the little stream, which, winding through the narrow valley, encountered at every hundred yards the opposition of a rock or precipitous bank on the one side, which altered its course, and caused it to shoot off in an oblique direction to the other. The hills which ascend on each side of this glen are very steep, and rise boldly over the stream, which is thus imprisoned within their barriers. The sides of the glen are impracticable for horse, and are only to be traversed by means of the sheep-paths which lie along their sides. It would not be readily supposed that a road so hopeless and so difficult could lead to any habitation more important than the summer shealing of a shepherd.

Yet the glen, though lonely, nearly inaccessible, and sterile, was not then absolutely void of beauty. The turf which covered the small portion of level ground on the sides of the stream, was as close and verdant as if it had occupied the scythes of a hundred gardeners once a fortnight; and it was garnished with an embroidery of daisies and wild flowers, which the scythes would certainly have destroyed. The little brook, now confined between closer limits, now left at large to choose its course through the narrow valley, danced carelessly on from stream to pool, light and unturbid, as that better class of spirits who pass their way through life, yielding to innumerable obstacles, but as far from being subdued by them as the sailor who meets by chance with an unfavourable wind, and shapes his course so as to be driven back as little as possible.

The mountains, as they would have been called in England, Scottish the steep trees, rose abruptly over the little glen, here presenting the gray face of a rock, from which the turf had been pecked by the torrents, and there displaying patches of wood and heath, which had escaped the waste of the cattle and the mow of the feuars, and which, feathering rapidly up the beds of empty torrents, or occu-

pying the concave recesses of the bank, gave at once beauty and variety to the landscape. Above these scattered woods rose the hill, in barren, but purple majesty; the dark rich hue, particularly in autumn, contrasting beautifully with the thickets of oak and birch, the mountain ashes and thorns, the alder and quivering aspens, which chaquered off varied the descent, and not less with the dark-green, and velvet turf, which composed the level part of the narrow glen.

Yet, though thus embellished, the scene could neither be strictly termed sublime nor beautiful, and scarcely even picturesque or striking. But its extreme solitude pressed on the heart; the traveller felt that uncertainty whether he was going, or in what so wild a path was to terminate, which, at times, strikes more on the imagination than the grand features of a show-scene, when you know the exact distance of the inn where your dinner is bespoke, and at the moment preparing. These are ideas, however, of a far later age; for at the time we treat of, the picturesque, the beautiful, the sublime, and all their intermediate shades, were ideas absolutely unknown to the inhabitants and occasional visitors of Glendearg.

Those had, however, attached to the scene feelings fitting the time. Its name, signifying the Red Valley, seems to have been derived, not only from the purple colour of the heath, with which the upper part of the rising banks was profusely clothed, but also from the dark red colour of the rocks, and of the precipitous earthen banks, which in that country are called *scourgs*. Another glen, about the head of Ettrick, has acquired the same name from similar circumstances; and there are probably more in Scotland to which it has been given.

As our Glendearg did not abound in mortal visitants, superstition, that it might not be absolutely destitute of inhabitants, had peopled its recesses with beings belonging to another world. The savage and capricious Brown Man of the Moors, a being which seems the genuine descendant of the northern dwarfs, was supposed to be seen there frequently, especially after the autumnal equinox, when the fogs were thick, and objects not easily distinguished. The Scottish fairies, too, a whimsical, irritable, and mischievous tribe, who, though at times capriciously benevolent, were more frequently adverse to mortals, were also supposed to have formed a residence in a particularly wild recess of the glen, of which the real name was, in allusion to that circumstance, *Corrie nan Shian*, which, in corrupted Celtic, signifies the Hollow of the Fairies. But the neighbours were more cautious in speaking about this place, and avoided giving it a name, from an idea common then throughout all the British and Celtic provinces of Scotland, and still retained in many places, that to speak either good or ill of this capricious race of imaginary beings, is to provoke their resentment, and that secrecy and silence is what they chiefly desire from those who may intrude upon their revels, or discover their haunts.

A mysterious terror was thus attached to the dale, which afforded access from the broad valley of the Tweed, up the little glen we have described, to the fortalice called the Tower of Glendearg. Beyond the knoll, where, as we have said, the tower was situated, the hills grew more steep, and narrowed on the slender brook, so as scarce to

leave a footpath; and there the glen terminated in a wild waterfall, where a slender thread of water dashed in a precipitous fine of foam over two or three precipices. Yet farther in the same direction, and above these successive cataracts, lay a wild and extensive morass, frequented only by waterfowl, wide, waste, apparently almost interminable, and serving in a great measure to separate the inhabitants of the glen from those who lived to the northward.

To restless and indefatigable moss-troopers, indeed, these morasses were well known, and sometimes afforded a retreat. They often rode down the glen—called at this tower—asked and received hospitality—but still with a sort of reserve on the part of its more peaceful inhabitants, who entertained them as a party of North-American Indians might be received by a new European settler, as much out of fear as hospitality, while the uppermost wish of the landlord is the speedy departure of the savage guests.

This had not always been the current of feeling in the little valley and its tower. Simon Glendinning, its former inhabitant, boasted his connection by blood to that ancient family of Glendonwyne, on the western border. He used to narrate, at his fireside, in the autumn evenings, the feats of the family to which he belonged, one of whom fell by the side of the brave Earl of Douglas at Otterbourne. On these occasions Simon usually held upon his knee an ancient broadsword, which had belonged to his ancestors before any of the family had consented to accept a shelter under the peaceful dominion of the monks of Saint Mary's. In modern days, Simon might have lived at ease on his own estate, and quietly murmured against the fate that had doomed him to dwell there, and cut off his access to martial renown. But so many opportunities, nay, so many calls there were for him, who in those days spoke big, to make good his words by his actions, that Simon Glendinning was soon under the necessity of marching with the men of the Halidome, as it was called, of Saint Mary's, in that disastrous campaign which was concluded by the battle of Pinkie.

The Catholic clergy were deeply interested in that national quarrel, the principal object of which was, to prevent the union of the infant Queen Mary with the son of the heretical Henry VIII. The Monks had called out their vassals, under an experienced leader. Many of themselves had taken arms, and marched to the field, under a banner representing a female, supposed to personify the Scottish Church, kneeling in the attitude of prayer, with the legend, *Afflicta Sponsa se obliuiscit*.

The Scots, however, in all their wars, had more occasion for good and cautious generals, than for excitation, whether political or enthusiastic. Their headlong and impatient courage uniformly induced them to rush into action without duly weighing either their own situation, or that of their enemies, and the inevitable consequence was frequent defeat. With the dolorous slaughter of Pinkie we have nothing to do, excepting that among ten thousand men of low and high degree, Simon Glendinning, of the Tower of Glendearg, hit the dust, no way deserving in his death that ancient name from which he derived his descent.

When the doleful news, which spread terror and mourning through the whole of Scotland, reached the Tower of Glendearg, the widow of Simon, Elspeth Brydone by her family name, was alone in that desolate habitation, excepting a hind or two, alike past martial and agricultural labour, and the helpless widows and families of those who had fallen with their master. The feeling of desolation was universal;—but what availed it! The monks, their patrons and protectors, were driven from their Abbey by the English forces, who now overran the country, and enforced at least an appearance of submission on the part of the inhabitants. The Protector, Somerset, formed a strong camp among the ruins of the ancient Castle of Roxburgh, and compelled the neighbouring country to come in, pay tribute, and take assurance from him, as the phrase then went. Indeed, there was no power of resistance remaining; and the few barons, whose high spirit disdained even the appearance of surrender, could only retreat into the wildest fastnesses of the country, leaving their houses and property to the wrath of the English, who detached parties every where to distress, by military exaction, those whose chiefs had not made their submission. The Abbot and his community having retreated beyond the Forth, their lands were severely forayed, as their sentiments were held peculiarly inimical to the alliance with England.

Amongst the troops detached on this service was a small party, commanded by Stawarth Bolton, a captain in the English army, and full of the blunt and unpretending gallantry and generosity which has so often distinguished that nation. Resistance was in vain. Elspeth Brydone, when she descried a dozen of horsemen threading their way up the glen, with a man at their head, whose scarlet cloak, bright armour, and dancing plume, proclaimed him a leader, saw no better protection for herself than to issue from the iron grate, covered with a long mourning veil, and holding one of her two sons in each hand, to meet the Englishman—state her deserted condition—place the little tower at his command—and beg for his mercy. She stated, in a few brief words, her intention, and added, "I submit, because I have no means of resistance."

"And I do not ask your submission, mistress, for the same reason," replied the Englishman. "To be satisfied of your peaceful intentions is all I ask; and, from what you tell me, there is no reason to doubt them."

"At least, sir," said Elspeth Brydone, "take share of what our spend and our garners afford. Your horses are tired—your folk want refreshment."

"Not a whit—not a whit," answered the honest Englishman; "I shall never be said we disturbed by carousal the widow of a brave soldier, while she was mourning for her husband.—Comrade, thou about.—Yet, stay," he added, checking his war-horse, "my parties are out in every direction; they must have some token that your family are under my assurance of safety.—Here, my little fellow," said he, speaking to the eldest boy, who might be about nine or ten years old, "lead me thy homestead."

The child, saddest, looked milky, and hesitated, while the mother, with many a fervent prayer, and such earnest shillings as under mothers give

THE MONASTERY.

to spoiled children, at length succeeded in snatching the bonnet from him, and handing it to the English leader.

Stawarth Bolton took his embroidered red cross from his barret-cap, and putting it into the loop of the boy's bonnet, said to the mistress, (for the title of lady was not given to dames of her degree,) "By this token, which all my people will respect, you will be freed from any importunity on the part of our forayers." He placed it on the boy's head; but it was no sooner there, than the little fellow, his veins swelling, and his eyes shooting fire through tears, snatched the bonnet from his head, and, ere his mother could interfere, skinned it into the brook. The other boy ran instantly to fish it out again, threw it back to his brother, first taking out the cross, which, with great veneration, he kissed and put into his bosom. The Englishman was half diverted, half surprised, with the scene.

"What mean ye by throwing away Saint George's red cross?" said he to the elder boy, in a tone betwixt jest and earnest.

"Because Saint George is a southern saint," said the child, sulkily.

"Good"—said Stawarth Bolton.—"And what did you mean by taking it out of the brook again—my little fellow?" he demanded of the younger.

"Because the priest says it is the common sign of salvation to all good Christians."

"Why, good again!" said the honest soldier. "I protest unto you, mistress, I envy you these boys. Are they both yours?"

Stawarth Bolton had reason to put the question, for Halbert Glendinning, the elder of the two, had hair as dark as the raven's plumage, black eyes, large, bold, and sparkling, that glittered under eyebrows of the same complexion; a skin deep embrowned, though it could not be termed swarthy, and an air of activity, frankness, and determination, far beyond his age. On the other hand, Edward, the younger brother, was light-haired, blue-eyed, and of fairer complexion, in countenance rather pale, and not exhibiting that rosy hue which colours the sanguine cheek of robust health. Yet the boy had nothing sickly or ill-conditioned in his look, but was, on the contrary, a fair and handsome child, with a smiling face, and mild, yet cheerful eye.

The mother glanced a proud motherly glance, first at the one, and then at the other, ere she answered the Englishman, "Surely, sir, they are both my children."

"And by the same father, mistress?" said Stawarth; but, seeing a blush of displeasure strike on her brow, he instantly added, "Nay, I mean no offence; I would have asked the same question at any of my gossips in merry Lincoln.—Well, dame, you have two fair boys; I would I could borrow one, for Dame Bolton and I live childless in our old hall.—Come, little fellows, which of you will go with me?"

The trembling mother, half-fearing as he spoke, drew the children towards her, one with either hand, while they both answered the stranger. "I will not go with you," said Halbert, boldly, "for you are a false-hearted Southern; and the Southern killed my father; and I will war on you to the death, when I can draw my father's sword."

"God-a-mercy, my little levin-bolt," said Stawarth, "the goodly custom of deadly feud will never go down in thy day, I presume.—And you, my fine white-head, will you not go with me, to ride a cock-horse?"

"No," said Edward, demurely, "for you are a heretic."

"Why, God-a-mercy still!" said Stawarth Bolton. "Well, dame, I see I shall find no recruits for my troop from you; and yet I do envy you these two little chubby knaves." He sighed a sigh, as was visible, in spite of gorget and corselet, and then added, "And yet, my dame and I would but quarrel which of the knaves we should like best; for I should wish for the black-eyed rogue—and she, I warrant me, for that blue-eyed, fair-haired darling. Nathless, we must brook our solitary wedlock, and wish joy to those that are more fortunate.—Sergeant Britton, do thou remain here till recalled—protect this family, as under assuagance—do them no wrong, and suffer no wrong to be done to them, as thou wilt answer it.—Dame, Britton is a married man, old and steady; feed him on what you will, but give him not over much liquor."

Dame Glendinning again offered refreshments, but with a faltering voice, and an obvious desire her invitation should not be accepted. The fact was, that, supposing her boys as precious in the eyes of the Englishman as in her own, (the most ordinary of parental errors,) she was half afraid, that the admiration he expressed of them in his blunt manner might end in his actually carrying off one or other of the little darlings whom he appeared to covet so much. She kept hold of their hands, therefore, as if her feeble strength could have been of service, had any violence been intended, and saw with joy she could not disguise, the little party of horse countermarch, in order to descend the glen. Her feelings did not escape Stawarth Bolton, "I forgive you, dame," he said, "for being suspicious that an English falcon was hovering over your Scottish moor-brood. But fear not—those who have fewest children have fewest cares; nor does a wise man covet those of another household. Adieu, dame; when the black-eyed rogue is able to drive a foray from England, teach him to spare women and children, for the sake of Stawarth Bolton."

"God be with you, gallant Southern!" said Elspeth Glendinning, but not till he was out of hearing, spurring on his good horse to regain the head of his party, whose plumage and armour were now glancing and gradually disappearing in the distance, as they wended down the glen.

"Mother," said the elder boy, "I will not say amen to a prayer for a Southern."

"Mother," said the younger, more reverentially, "is it right to pray for a heretic?"

"The God to whom I pray only knows," answered poor Elspeth; "but these two words, Southern and heretic, have already cost Scotland ten thousand of her best and bravest, and me a husband, and you a father; and, whether blessing or blessing, I never wish to hear them more.—Follow me to the Place, etc," she said to Britton, "and such as we have to offer you shall be at your disposal."

CHAPTER III.

They lighted down on Tweed water,
And blew their coals me hot,
And fired the March and Teviotdale,
All in an evening late.

Auld ballad.

THE report soon spread through the patrimony of Saint Mary's and its vicinity, that the Mistress of Glendearg had received assurance from the English Captain, and that her cattle were not to be driven off, or her corn burned. Among others who heard this report, it reached the ears of a lady, who, once much higher in rank than Elspeth Glendinning, was now by the same calamity reduced to even greater misfortune.

She was the widow of a brave soldier, Walter Avenel, descended of a very ancient Dorder family, who once possessed immense estates in Eekdale. These had long since passed from them into other hands, but they still enjoyed an ancient Barony of considerable extent, not very far from the patrimony of Saint Mary's, and lying upon the same side of the river with the narrow vale of Glendearg, at the head of which was the little tower of the Glendinnings. Here they had lived, bearing a respectable rank amongst the gentry of their province, though neither wealthy nor powerful. This general regard had been much augmented by the skill, courage, and enterprise which had been displayed by Walter Avenel, the last Baron.

When Scotland began to recover from the dreadful shock she had sustained after the battle of Flukie-Cleuch, Avenel was one of the first who, assembling a small force, set an example in those bloody and unsparing skirmishes, which showed that a nation, though conquered and overrun by invaders, may yet wage against them such a war of detail as shall in the end become fatal to the foreigners. In one of these, however, Walter Avenel fell, and the news which came to the house of his fathers was followed by the distracting intelligence, that a party of Englishmen were coming to plunder the mansion and lands of his widow, in order, by this act of terror, to prevent others from following the example of the deceased.

The unfortunate lady had no better refuge than the miserable cottage of a shepherd among the hills, to which she was hastily removed, scarce conscious where or for what purpose her terrified attendants were removing her and her infant daughter from her own house. Here she was tended with all the duteous service of ancient times by the shepherd's wife, Tibb Tacket, who in better days had been her own house-woman. For a time the lady was unconscious of her misery; but when the first stunning effect of grief was so far passed away that she could form an estimate of her own situation, the widow of Avenel had cause to envy the lot of her husband in his dark and silent abode. The domestics who had guided her to her place of refuge, were presently obliged to depart for their own safety, or to seek for necessary subsistence; and the shepherd and his wife, whose poor cottage she shared, were soon after deprived of the means of affording their late mistress such coarse sustenance which they had jointly shared with her. Some of the English buyers had discovered and driven off the few

sheep which had escaped the first researches of their avarice. Two cows shared the fate of the remnant of their stock; they had afforded the family almost their sole support, and now famine appeared to stare them in the face.

"We are broken and beggared now, out and out," said old Martin the shepherd—and he wrung his hands in the bitterness of agony, "the thieves, the harrying thieves! not a cloot left of the haddil hirsel!"

"And to see poor Grizy and Crumbie," said his wife, "turning back their necks to the byre, and routing while the stony-hearted villains were brogging them on wi' their lances!"

"There were but four of them," said Martin, "and I have seen the day forty wad not have ventured this length. But our strength and manhood is gane with our puir maister."

"For the sake of the holy rood, whisht, man," said the goodwife, "our laddy is half gane already, as ye may see by that fleigtering of the ee-lid—a word mair and she's dead outright."

"I could almost wish," said Martin, "we were a' gane, for, what to do passes my puir wit. I care little for mysell, or ye, Tibb,—we can make a fend—work or want—we can do baith, but she can do neither."

They canvassed their situation thus openly before the lady, convinced by the paleness of her look, her quivering lip, and dead-set eye, that she neither heard nor understood what they were saying.

"There is a way," said the shepherd, "but I kenna if she could bring her heart to it,—there's Simon Glendinning's widow of the glen yonder, has had assurance from the Southern loons, and nae soldier to steer them for one cause or other. Now, if the laddy could bow her mind to take quarters with Elspeth Glendinning till better days cast up, nae doubt it wad be doing an honour to the like of her, but——"

"An honour," answered Tibb, "ay, by my word, sic an honour as wad be pride to her kin mony a lang year after her banes were in the mould. Oh! gudeman, to hear ye even the Lady of Avenel to seeking quarters wi' a Kirk-vassal's widow!"

"Loath should I be to wish her to it," said Martin; "but what may we do!—to stay here is mere starvation; and where to go, I'm sure I ken nae mair than ony tup I ever herded."

"Speak no more of it," said the widow of Avenel, suddenly joining in the conversation, "I will go to the tower.—Dame Elspeth is of good folk; a widow, and the mother of orphans,—she will give us house-room until something be thought upon. These evil showers make the low bush better than no field."

"See there, see there," said Martin, "you see the laddy has twice our senses."

"And natural it is," said Tibb, "seeing that she is convent-bred, and can lay all herdery, herby white-scam and shall-work."

"Do you not think," said the lady to Martin, still clasping her child to her bosom, and making it clear from what motives she desired the refuge, "that Dame Glendinning will make us welcome?"

"Blithely welcome, blithely welcome, my laddy," answered Martin cheerily, "and we shall deserve a welcome at her hand. Men are scarce now, my laddy, with their wars; and give us a thought of

came to it, I can do as gude a day's darg as ever I did in my life, and Tibb can sort cows with ony living woman."

"And muckle mair could I do," said Tibb, "were it in ony feasible house; but there will be neither pearls to mend, nor pinnars to busk up, in Elsieph Glendinning's."

"Whist wi' your pride, woman," said the shepherd, "enough ye can do, baith outside and inside, an ye set your mind to it; and hard it is if we twa canna work for three folk's meat, forby my dainty wee leddy there. Come awa, come awa, nae use in staying here langer; we have five Scots miles over moss and muir, and that is nae easy walk for a leddy born and bred."

Household stuff there was little or none to remove or care for; an old pony which had escaped the plunderers, owing partly to its pitiful appearance, partly from the reluctance which it shewed to be caught by strangers, was employed to carry the few blankets, and other trifles which they possessed. When Shagram came to his master's well known whistle, he was surprised to find the poor thing had been wounded, though slightly, by an arrow, which one of the forayers had shot off in anger after he had long chased it in vain.

"Ay, Shagram," said the old man, as he applied something to the wound, "must you rue the lang-bow as well as all of us!"

"What corner in Scotland rucs it not!" said the Lady of Avenel.

"Ay, ay, madam," said Martin, "God keep this kindly Scot from the cloth-yard shaft, and he will keep himself from the handy stroke. But let us go our way; the trash that is left I can come back for. There is nae ane to stir it but the good neighbours, and they —"

"For the love of God, goodman," said his wife, in a remonstrating tone, "haud your peace! Think what ye're saying, and we hae nae muckle wild land to go over before we win to the girth gate."

The husband nodded, acquiescence; for it was deemed highly imprudent to speak of the fairies either by their title of *good neighbours* or by any other, especially when about to pass the place, which they were supposed to haunt!

They set forward on their pilgrimage on the last day of October. "This is thy birth-day, my sweet Mary," said the mother, as a sting of bitter recollection crossed her mind. "Oh, who could have believed that the head, which, a few years since, was cradled amongst so many rejoicing friends, may perhaps this night seek a cover in vain!"

The exiled family then set forward,—Mary Avenel, a lovely girl between five and six years old, riding gipsy fashion upon Shagram, betwixt two bundles of bedding; the Lady of Avenel walking by the animal's side; Tibb leading the bridle, and old Martin walking a little before, looking anxiously around him to explore the way.

Martin's task as guide, after two or three miles' walking, became more difficult than he himself had expected, or than he was willing to avow. It happened that the extensive range of pasturage, with which he was conversant, lay to the west, and to get into the little valley of Glendearg he had to proceed easterly. In the wilder districts of Scotland, the passage from one vale to another, other-

wise than by descending that which you leave, and reascending the other, is often very difficult.—Heights and hollows, mosses and rocks intervene, and all those local impediments which throw a traveller out of his course. So that Martin, however sure of his general direction, became conscious, and at length was forced reluctantly to admit, that he had missed the direct road to Glendearg, though he insisted they must be very near it. "If we can but win across this wide bog," he said, "I shall warrant ye are on the top of the tower."

But to get across the bog was a point of no small difficulty. The farther they ventured into it, though proceeding with all the caution which Martin's experience recommended, the more unsound the ground became, until, after they had passed some places of great peril, their best argument for going forward came to be, that they had to encounter equal danger in returning.

The Lady of Avenel had been tenderly nurtured, but what will not a woman endure when her child is in danger? Complaining less of the dangers of the road than her attendants, who had been injured to such from their infancy, she kept herself close by the side of the pony, watching its every footstep, and ready, if it should flounder in the morass, to snatch her little Mary from its back. At length they came to a place where the ground greatly deteriorated, for all around him was broken lumps of heath, divided from each other by deep sloughs of black tenacious mire. After great consideration, Martin, selecting what he thought the safest path, began himself to lead forward Shagram, in order to afford greater security to the child. But Shagram snorted, laid his ears back, stretched his two feet forward, and drew his hind feet under him, so as to adopt the best possible posture for obstinate resistance and refused to move one yard in the direction indicated. Old Martin, much puzzled, now hesitated whether to exert his absolute authority, or to defer to the contumacious obstinacy of Shagram, and was not greatly comforted by his wife's observation, who, seeing Shagram stare with his eyes, distend his nostrils, and tremble with terror, hinted that "he surely saw more than they could see."

In this dilemma, the child suddenly exclaimed—"Bonny leddy signs to us to come yon gate." They all looked in the direction where the child pointed, but saw nothing, save a wreath of rising mist, which fancy might form into a human figure; but which afforded to Martin only the sorrowful conviction, that the danger of their situation was about to be increased by a heavy fog. He once more essayed to lead forward Shagram; but the animal was inflexible in its determination not to move in the direction Martin recommended. "Take your awy, way for it then," said Martin, "and let us see what you can do for us."

Shagram, abandoned to the discretion of his own free-will, set off boldly in the direction the child had pointed. There was nothing wonderful in this, nor in its bringing them safe to the other side of the dangerous morass; for the instinct of these animals in traversing bogs is one of the most curious parts of their nature, and is a fact generally established. But it was remarkable, that the child more than once mentioned the beautiful lady and her signals, and that Shagram seemed to be in the secret, always moving in the same direction

which she indicated. The Lady of Avenel took little notice at the time, her mind being probably occupied by the instant danger; but her attendants changed expressive looks with each other more than once.

"All-Hallow Eve!" said Tibb, in a whisper to Martin.

"For the mercy of Our Lady, not a word of that now!" said Martin in reply. "Tell your beads, woman, if you cannot be silent."

When they got once more on firm ground, Martin recognized certain land-marks, or cairns, on the tops of the neighbouring hills, by which he was enabled to guide his course, and ere long they arrived at the Tower of Glendearg.

It was at the sight of this little fortalice that the misery of her lot pressed hard on the poor Lady of Avenel. When by any accident they had met at church, market, or other place of public resort, she remembered the distant and respectful air with which the wife of the warlike baron was addressed by the spouse of the humble fear. "And now, so much was her pride humbled, that she was to ask to share the precarious safety of the same fear's widow, and her pittance of food, which might perhaps be yet more precarious. Martin probably guessed what was passing in her mind, for he looked at her with a wistful glance, as if to deprecate any change of resolution; and answering to his looks, rather than his words, she said, while the sparkle of subdued pride once more glanced from her eye; "If it were for myself alone, I could but die—but for this infant—the last pledge of Avenel—"

"True, my lady," said Martin hastily; and, as if to prevent the possibility of her retracting, he added, "I will step on and see Dame Elspeth—I lend her husband weel, and have bought and sold with him, for as great a man as he was."

Martin's tale was soon told, and met all acceptance from her companion in misfortune. The Lady of Avenel had been meek and courteous in her prosperity; in adversity, therefore, she met with the greater sympathy. Besides, there was a point of pride in sheltering and supporting a woman of such superior birth and rank; and, not to do Elspeth Glendinning injustice, she felt sympathy for one whose fate resembled her own in so many points, yet was so much more severe. Every species of hospitality was gladly and respectfully extended to the distressed travellers, and they were kindly requested to stay as long at Glendearg as their circumstances rendered necessary, or their inclination prompted.

CHAPTER IV.

Nether be I found by thee unawed,
On that thine halloo'd eve abroad,
When goblins haunt from food and fen,
The steps of men,
COLLINS'S Ode to Fear.

As the country became more settled, the Lady of Avenel would have willingly returned to her husband's mansion. But that was no longer in her power. It was a reign of minority, when the sovereign had the best right, and when acts of usurpation were frequent amongst those who had much power and little conscience.

Julian Avenel, the younger brother of the deceased Walter, was a person of this description. He hesitated not to seize upon his brother's house and lands, so soon as the retreat of the English permitted him. At first, he occupied the property in the name of his niece, but when the lady proposed to return with her child to the mansion of its fathers, he gave her to understand, that Avenel, being a male fief, descended to the brother, instead of the daughter, of the last possessor. The ancient philosopher declined a dispute with the emperor who commanded twenty legions, and the widow of Walter Avenel was in no condition to maintain a contest with the leader of twenty more-troopers. Julian was also a man of service, who could back a friend in case of need, and was sure, therefore, to find protectors among the ruling powers. In short, however clear the little Mary's right to the possessions of her father, her mother saw the necessity of giving way, at least for the time, to the usurpation of her uncle.

Her patience and forbearance were so far attended with advantage, that Julian, for very shame's sake, could no longer suffer her to be absolutely dependant on the charity of Elspeth Glendinning. A drove of cattle and a bull (which were probably missed by some English 'farmer') were driven to the pastures of Glendearg; presents of raiment and household stuff were sent liberally, and some little money, though with a more sparing hand: for those in the situation of Julian Avenel could come more easily by the goods, than the representing medium of value, and made their payments chiefly in kind.

In the meantime, the widows of Walter Avenel and Simon Glendinning had become habituated to each other's society, and were unwilling to part. The lady could dope no more secret and secure residence than in the Tower of Glendearg, and she was now in a condition to support her share of the mutual housekeeping. Elspeth, on the other hand, felt pride, as well as pleasure, in the society of a guest of such distinction, and was at all times willing to pay much greater deference than the Lady of Walter Avenel could be prevailed on to accept.

Martin and his wife diligently served the united family in their several vocations, and yielded obedience to both mistresses, though always considering themselves as the especial servants of the Lady of Avenel. This distinction sometimes occasioned a slight degree of difference between Dame Elspeth and Tibb; the former being jealous of her own consequence, and the latter apt to lay too much stress upon the rank and family of her mistress. But both were alike desirous to conceal such petty squabbles from the lady, her hostess source yielding to her old domestic in respect for her person. Neither did the difference exist in such a degree as to interrupt the general harmony of the family; for the one wisely gave way as she saw the other become warm; and Tibb, though she often gave the first provocation, had generally the sense to be the first in relinquishing the argument.

The world which lay beyond was gradually forgotten by the inhabitants of this sequestered glen, and unless when she attended mass at the Monastery Church upon some high holiday, Alice of Avenel almost forgot that she once had an equal rank with the proud wives of the neighbouring

barons and nobles who on such occasions crowded to the solemnity. The recollection gave her little pain. She loved her husband for himself, and in his inestimable loss all lesser subjects of regret had ceased to interest her. At times, indeed, she thought of claiming the protection of the Queen Regent (Mary of Guise) for her little orphan, but the fear of Julian Avenel always came between. She was sensible that he would have neither scruple nor difficulty in spiriting away the child, (if he did not proceed farther,) should he once consider its existence as formidable to his interest. Besides, he led a wild and unsettled life, mingling in all feuds and forays, wherever there was a spear to be broken; he evinced no purpose of marrying, and the fate which he continually was braving might at length remove him from his usurped inheritance. Alice of Avenel, therefore, judged it wise to check all ambitious thoughts for the present, and remain quiet in the rude, but peaceable retreat, to which Providence had conducted her.

It was upon an All-Hallow's eve, when the family had passed together for the space of three years, that the domestic circle was assembled round the blazing turf-fire, in the old narrow hall of the Tower of Glendearg. The idea of the masters or mistresses of the mansion feeding or living apart from their domestics, was at this period never entertained. The highest end of the board, the most commodious settle by the fire,—these were the only marks of distinction; and the servants mingled, with deference indeed, but unimproved and with freedom, in whatever conversation was going forward. But the two or three domestics, kept merely for agricultural purposes, had retired to their own cottages without, and with them a couple of wenches, usually employed within doors, the daughters of one of the hinds.

After their departure, Martin looked, first, the iron grate; and, secondly, the inner door of the tower, when the domestic circle was thus arranged. Dame Elspeth sat pulling the thread from her distaff; Tibb watched the progress of staling the whey, which hung in a large pot upon the crook, a chain terminated by a hook, which was suspended in the chimney to serve the purpose of the modern crane. Martin, while busied in repairing some of the household articles, (for every man in those days was his own carpenter and smith, as well as his own tailor and shoemaker,) kept from time to time a watchful eye upon the three children.

They were allowed, however, to exercise their juvenile restlessness by running up and down the hall, behind the seats of the elder members of the family, with the privilege of occasionally making excursions into one or two small apartments which opened from it, and gave excellent opportunity to play at hide-and-seek. This night, however, the children seemed not disposed to avail themselves of their privilege of visiting these dark regions, but preferred carrying on their gambols in the vicinity of the light.

In the meanwhile, Alice of Avenel, sitting close to an iron candlestick, which supported a misshapen torch of domestic manufacture, read small detached passages from a thick clasped volume, which she preserved with the greatest care. The act of reading, she had acquired by her residence in a nunnery during her youth, but she seldom, of late years, put it to any other use than

perusing this little volume, which formed her whole library. The family listened to the portions which she selected, as to some good thing which there was a merit in hearing with respect, whether it was fully understood or no. To her daughter, Alice of Avenel had determined to impart their mystery more fully, but the knowledge was at that period attended with personal danger, and was not rashly to be trusted to a child.

The noise of the romping children interrupted, from time to time, the voice of the lady, and drew on the noisy culprits the rebuke of Elspeth.

"Could they not go farther a-field, if they behoved to make such a din, and disturb the lady's good words?" And this command was backed with the threat of sending the whole party to bed if it was not attended to punctually. Acting under the injunction, the children first played at a greater distance from the party, and more quietly, and then began to stray into the adjacent apartments, as they became impatient of the restraint to which they were subjected. But, all at once, the two boys came openmouthed into the hall, to tell that there was an armed man in the spence.

"It must be Christie of Clint-hill," said Martin, rising; "what can have brought him here at this time?"

"Or how came he in?" said Elspeth.

"Alas! what can he seek?" said the Lady of Avenel, to whom this man, a retainer of her husband's brother, and who sometimes executed his commissions at Glendearg, was an object of secret apprehension and suspicion. "Gracious heavens!" she added, rising up, "where is my child?" All rushed to the spence, Halbert Glendinning first arming himself with a rusty sword, and the younger seizing upon the lady's book. They hastened to the spence, and were relieved of a part of their anxiety by meeting Mary at the door of the apartment. She did not seem in the slightest degree alarmed, or disturbed. They rushed into the spence, (a sort of interior apartment in which the family ate their victuals in the summer season,) but there was no one there.

"Where is Christie of Clint-hill?" said Martin.

"I do not know," said little Mary; "I never saw him."

"And what made you, ye misleard loons," said Dame Elspeth to her two boys, "come you gate into the ha', roaring like bulls, to frighten the leddy, and her far frae strong?" The boys looked at each other in silence and confusion, and their mother proceeded with her lecture. "Could ye find nae night for 'daffin but Hallowe'en, and nae time but when the leddy was reading to us about the holy Saints! May ne'er be in my fingers, if I dinna sort ye bairn for it!" The eldest boy bent his eyes on the ground, the younger began to weep, but neither spoke; and the mother would have proceeded to extremities, but for the interposition of the little maiden.

"Dame Elspeth, it was my fault—I did say to them, that I saw a man in the spence."

"And what made you do so, child," said her mother, "to startle us all thus?"

"Because," said Mary, lowering her voice, "I could not help it."

"Not help it, Mary!—you occasioned all this idle noise, and you could not help it! How means you by that, misson?"

"There really was an armed man in this space," said Mary; "and because I was surprised to see him, I cried out to Halbert and Edward——"

"She has told it herself," said Halbert Glendinning, "or it had never been told by me."

"Nor by me neither," said Edward, emulously.

"Mistress Mary," said Elspeth, "you never told us anything before that was not true; tell us if this was a Hallowe'en cantrip, and make an end of it." The Lady of Avenel looked as if she would have interfered, but knew not how; and Elspeth, who was too eagerly curious to regard any distant hint, persevered in her inquiries. "Was it Christie of the Clint-hill?—I would not for a mark that he were about the house, and a body no ken where."

"It was not Christie," said Mary; "it was——it was a gentleman——a gentleman with a bright breastplate, like what I have seen langyne, when we dwelt at Avenel——"

"What like was he?" continued Tibb, who now took share in the investigation.

"Black-haired, black-eyed, with a pecked black beard," said the child, "and many a fold of pearly round his neck, and hanging down his breast over his breastplate; and he had a beautiful hawk, with silver bells, standing on his left hand, with a crimson silk hood upon its head——"

"Ask her no more questions, for the love of God," said the anxious maternal to Elspeth, "but look to my laddy!" But the Lady of Avenel, taking Mary in her hand, turned hastily away, and, walking into the hall, gave them no opportunity of remarking in what manner she received the child's communication, which she thus cut short. What Tibb thought of it appeared from her crossing herself repeatedly, and whispering into Elspeth's ear, "Saints Mary preserve us!—the lassie has seen her father!"

When they reached the hall, they found the lady holding her daughter on her knee, and kissing her repeatedly. When they entered, she again arose, as if to shun observation, and retired to the little apartment where her child and she occupied the same bed.

The boys were also sent to their cabin, and no one remained by the hall fire save the faithful Tibb and Dame Elspeth, excellent persons both, and as thorough gossipers as ever wagged a tongue.

It was but natural that they should instantly resume the subject of the supernatural appearance, for such they deemed it, which had this night alarmed the family.

"I could have wished it had been the devil himself,—be good to and preserve us!—rather than Christie o' the Clint-hill," said the matron of the mansion, "for the word runs rife in the country, that he is aw o' the maist masterful thieves ever lap on horse."

"Hout-tout, Dame Elspeth," said Tibb, "fear ye naething frae Christie; tods keep their ain holes clean. Ye kirk-folk make sic a fasherie about men shifting a wee bit for their living! Our Border-lairds would ride with fifty men at their back, if a' the light-handed lads were out o' gate."

"Better they rode wi' none than distress the country-side the gate they do," said Dame Elspeth.

"But this is to hand back the Southern, then," said Tibb, "if ye take away the lance and broadsword? I trow we could write sonnets do that wi'

rock and wheel, and as little the monks wi' belt and book."

"And me weel as the lances and broadsword has kept them back, I trow!—I was naer beholden to ae Southron, and that was Stewarth Belton, than to a' the Border-riders ever wore Saint Andrew's cross—I reckon their skelping back and forward, and lifting honest men's gear, has been a main cause of a' the breach between us and England, and I am sure that cost me a kind goodman. They spoke about the wedding of the Prince and our Queen, but it's as like to ae the driving of the Cumberland folk's stocking that brought them down on us like dragons." Tibb would not have failed in other circumstances to adiew what she thought reflections disparaging to her country folk; but she recollected that Dame Elspeth was mistress of the family, curbed her own zealous patriotism, and hastened to change the subject.

"And is it not strange," she said, "that the heiress of Avenel should have seen her father this blessed night?"

"And ye think it was her father, then!" said Elspeth Glendinning.

"What else can I think?" said Tibb.

"It may have been something waur, in his likeness," said Dame Glendinning.

"I ken naething about that," said Tibb,—"but his likeness it was, that I will be sworn to, just as he used to ride out a-hawking; for having enemies in the country, he seldom laid off the breast-plate; and for my part," added Tibb, "I dinna think a man looks like a man unless he has steel on his breast, and by his side too."

"I have no skill of your harness on breast or side either," said Dame Glendinning; "but I ken there is little luck in Hallowe'en sights, for I have had ane myself."

"Indeed, Dame Elspeth!" said old Tibb, edging her stool closer to the huge elbow-chair occupied by her friend, "I should like to hear about that."

"Ye maun ken then, Tibb," said Dame Glendinning, "that when I was a hempie of nineteen or twenty, it wassa my fault if I wassa at a' the merry-makings time about."

"That was very natural," said Tibb; "but ye hae sobered since that, or ye wadna haud our braw gallants sae lightly."

"I have had that wad sober me or ony ane," said the matron. "Aweel, Tibb, a lass like me wassa to lack woocers, for I wassa sae ill-favoured that the tikes wad bark after me."

"How should that be," said Tibb, "and you sic a weel-favoured woman to this day?"

"Fie, fie, summer," said the matron of Glendinning, hitching her seat of honour, in her turn, a little nearer to the cottage-stool on which Tibb was seated; "weel-favoured is past my time of day; but I might pass then, for I wassa sae tockentat; but what I had a bit hand at my breast-lace. My father was portioner of Little-dearg."

"Ye hae tell'd us that before," said Tibb; "but apent the Hallowe'en?"

"Aweel, aweel, I had mair joy than me, but I favoured none o' them; and me, at Hallowe'en, Father Nicholas the schoolmaster—he was coarser before this father, Father Glendinning was aw—was cracking the stone and shaking his brown beer with us, and as I think he might be, and they would have me try a sample, or see what said was me;

and the monk said there was nae ill in it, and if there was, he would amail me for it. And wha but I into the barn to winnow my three weights o' naething—sair, sair my mind miggave me for fear o' wrang-doing and wrang-suffering baith; but I had aye a bairn spirit. I had not winnowed the last weight clean out, and the moon was shining bright upon the floor, when in stalked the presence of my dear Simon Glendinning, that is now happy. I never saw him plainer in my life than I did that moment; he held up an arrow as he passed me, and I awar'd awa wi' fright. Muckle wark there was to bring me to mysell again, and sair they tried to make me believe it was a trick of Father Nicolas and Simon between them; and that the strow was to signify Cupid's shaft, as the Father called it; and mony a time Simon wad threep it to me after I was married—gude man, he liked not it should be said that he was seen out o' the body!—But mark the end o' it, Tibb; we were married, and the gray-goose wing was the death o' him after a!"

"As it has been of ower mony brave men," said Tibb; "I wish there wass nae aebird as a goose in the wide world, forby the checking that ye hae at the burn-side."

"But tell me, Tibb," said Dame Glendinning, "what does your leddy aye do reading out o' that thick black book wi' the silver clasps?—these are ower mony gude words in it to come frae ony body but a priest—An it were about Robin Hood, or some o' David Lindsay's ballants, ane wad ken better what to say to it. I am no misdoubting your mistress nae way, but I wad like ill to hae a decent house haunted wi' ghaists and gyre-carlines."

"Ye hae nae reason to doubt my leddy, or ony thing she says or does, Dame Glendinning," said the faithful Tibb, something offended; "and touching the bairn, it's weel kend she was born on Hallowe'en was nine years gane, and they that are born on Hallowe'en whiles see mair than ither folk."

"And that wad be the cause, then, that the bairn didna mak muckle din about what it saw!—if it had been my Halbert himself, forby Edward; who is of softer nature, he wad hae yammered, the hail night of a constancy. But it's like Mistress Mary has sic sights mair natural to her."

"That may weel be," said Tibb; "for on Hallowe'en she was born, as I tell ye, and our auld parish priest wad fain hae had the night ower, and All-Hallow day begun. But for a' that, the sweet bairn is just like ither bairns, as ye may see yoursell; and except this blessed night, and ance before when we were in that weary bog on the road here, I kenna that it saw mair than ither folk."

"But what saw she in the bog, then," said Dame Glendinning, "forby moor-cocks and heather-blossoms?"

"The wean saw something like a white leddy that waised us the gate," said Tibb, "when we were like to hae perished in the moss-bags—certain it was that Shagran roisted, and I ken Martin thinks, he saw something."

"And what might the white leddy be?" said Elspeth; "have ye ony guess o' that?"

"It's weel kend that, Dame Elspeth," said Tibb; "if ye had lived under grit folk, as I hae done, ye wadna be to seek in that matter."

"I hae aye kept my ain ha' house stane my

head," said Elspeth, not without emphasis, "and if I hae nae lived wi' grit folk, grit folk have lived wi' me."

"Weel, weel, dame," said Tibb, "your pardon's prayit, there was nae offence meant. But ye maun ken the great ancient families canna be just served wi' the ordinary saunts, (praise to them!) like Saunt Anthony, Saunt Cuthbert, and the like, that come and gang at every sinner's bidding, but they hae a sort of saunts or angels, or what not, to themselves; and as for the White Maiden of Avenel, she is kend ower the haill country. And she is aye seen to yammer and wail before ony o' that family dies, as was weel kend by twenty folk before the death of Walter Avenel, haly be his cast!"

"If she can do nae mair than that," said Elspeth, somewhat scornfully, "they needna make mony vows to her, I trow. Can she make nae better fend for them than that, and hae naething better to do than wait on them?"

"Mony braw servicos can the White Maiden do for them to the boot of that, and has done in the auld histories," said Tibb, "but I mind o' naething in my day, except it was her that the bairn saw in the bog."

"Aweel, aweel, Tibb," said Dame Glendinning, raising and lighting the iron lamp, "these are great privileges of your grand folk. But our Laddy and Saunt Paul are good enough saunts for me, and I'se warrant them never leave me in a bog that they can hlep me out o', seeing I send four waxen candles to their chapels every Candlemas; and if they are not seen to weep at my death, I'se warrant them smile at my joyful rising again, whilk Heaven send to all of us, Amen."

"Amen," answered Tibb, devoutly; "and now it's time I should hap up the wee bit gathering turf, as the fire is ower low."

Busily she set herself to perform this duty. The relict of Simon Glendinning did but pause a moment to cast a heedful and cautious glance all around the hall, to see that nothing was out of its proper place; then, wishing Tibb good-night, she retired to repose.

"The deil's in the carline," said Tibb to herself, "because she was the wife of a cock-laird, she thinks herself grander, I trow, than the bowerwoman of a lady of that ilk!" Having given vent to her suppressed spleen in this little ejaculation, Tibb also betook herself to slumber.

CHAPTER V.

A priest, ye cry, a priest!—Jame shepherds they.
How shall they gather in the stamping flock?
Dumb dogs which bark not—how shall they compel
The loitering vagrants to the Master's fold?
Fitter to bark before the blessing fire,
And snuff the man next-handed Phillis' dream,
Than on the snow-wreath battle with the wolf.

Reformation.

THE health of the Lady of Avenel had been gradually decaying ever since her disaster. It seemed as if the few years which followed her husband's death had done on her the work of half a century. She lost the fresh elasticity of form, the colour and the mien of health, and became wasted, wan, and feeble. She appeared to have no formed complaint; yet it was evident to those

who looked on her, that her strength waned daily. Her lips at length became blanched and her eye dim; yet she spoke not of any desire to see a priest, until Elspeth Glendinning in her zeal could not refrain from touching upon a point which she deemed essential to salvation. Alice of Avenel received her hint kindly, and thanked her for it.

"If any good priest would take the trouble of such a journey," she said, "he should be welcome; for the prayers and lessons of the good must be at all times advantageous."

This quiet acquiescence was not quite what Elspeth Glendinning wished or expected. She made up, however, by her own enthusiasm, for the lady's want of eagerness to avail herself of ghostly counsel, and Martin was despatched with such haste as Shagram would make, to pray one of the religious men of Saint Mary's to come up to administer the last consolations to the widow of Walter de Avenel.

When the Sacristan had announced to the Lord Abbot, that the Lady of the unquhite Walter de Avenel was in very weak health in the Tower of Glendearg, and desired the assistance of a father confessor, the lordly monk paused on the request.

"We do remember Walter de Avenel," he said; "a good knight and a valiant; he was dispossessed of his lands, and slain by the Southron—May not the lady come hither to the sacrament of confession! the road is distant and painful to travel."

"The lady is unwell, holy father," answered the Sacristan, "and unable to bear the journey."

"True—ay,—yes—then must one of our brethren go to her—Knowest thou if she hath aught of a journey from this Walter de Avenel?"

"Very little, holy father," said the Sacristan; "she hath resided at Glendearg since her husband's death, well-nigh on the charity of a poor widow, called Elspeth Glendinning."

"Why, thou knowest all the widows in the country-side!" said the Abbot. "Ho! ho! ho!" and he shook his portly sides at his own jest.

"Ho! ho! ho!" echoed the Sacristan, in the tone and tune in which an inferior applauds the jest of his superior.—Then added, with a hypocritical snuffle, and a sly twinkle of his eye, "It is our duty, most holy father, to comfort the widow—He! he! he!"

This last laugh was more moderate, until the Abbot should put his sanction on the jest.

"Ho! ho!" said the Abbot; "then, to leave jesting, Father Philip, take thou thy riding gear, and go to comfort this Dame Avenel."

"But," said the Sacristan—

"Give me no But; neither But nor If pass between monk and Abbot, Father Philip; the hands of discipline must not be relaxed—heresy gathers force like a snow-ball—the multitude expect confessions and preachings from the Benedictine, as they would from so many beggarly friars—and we may not desert the vineyard, though the toil be grievous unto us."

"And with so little advantage to the holy monastery," said the Sacristan.

"True, Father Philip; but wot you not that what provoketh harm doth good? This Julian de Avenel lives a light and evil life, and should we neglect the widow of his brother, he might foray our lands, and we never able to shew who hurt us—therefore it is our duty to an ancient family,

who, in their day, have been benefactors to the Abbey. Away with these instantly, brother; ride night and day, an it be necessary, and let men see how diligent Abbot Beniface and his faithful children are in the execution of their duty—toil not deterring them, for the glea is five miles in length—fear not withholding them, for it is said to be haunted of spectres—nothing moving them from pursuit of their spiritual calling; go the confusion of calumnious heretics, and the comfort and edification of all true and faithful sons of the Catholic Church. I wonder what our brother Eastace will say to this!"

Breathless with his own picture of the dangers and toil which he was to encounter, and the fame which he was to acquire, (both by proxy,) the Abbot moved slowly to finish his luncheon in the refectory, and the Sacristan, with no very good will, accompanied old Martin in his return to Glendearg; the greatest impediment in the journey being the trouble of restraining his pampered mule, that she might tread in something like an equal pace with poor jaded Shagram.

After remaining an hour in private with his penitent, the monk returned moody and full of thought. Dame Elspeth, who had placed for the honoured guest some refreshment in the hall, was struck with the embarrassment which appeared in his countenance. Elspeth watched him with great anxiety. She observed there was that on his brow which rather resembled a person come from hearing the confession of some enormous crime, than the look of a confessor who resigns a reconciled penitent, not to earth, but to heaven. After long hesitating, she could not at length refrain from hazarding a question. She was sure, she said, the lady had made an easy shrift. Five years had they resided together, and she could safely say, no woman lived better.

"Woman," said the Sacristan, sternly, "thou speakest thou knowest not what—What avails clearing the outside of the platter, if the inside be foul with heresy?"

"Our dishes and trenchers are not so clean as they could be wished, holy father," said Elspeth, but half understanding what he said, and beginning with her apron to wipe the dust from the plates, of which she supposed him to complain.

"Forbear, Dame Elspeth," said the monk; "your plates are as clean as wooden trenchers and pewter flagons can well be; the foulness of which I speak is of that pestilential heresy which is daily becoming ingrained in this our Holy Church of Scotland, and as a canker-worm in the rose-garland of the Spouse."

"Holy Mother of Heaven!" said Dame Elspeth, crossing herself, "have I kept house with a heretic?"

"No, Elspeth, no," replied the monk; "it were too strong a speech for me to make of this unhappy lady, but I would I could say she is free from heretical opinions. Alas! they fly about like the pestilence by noon-day, and infect even the first and fairest of the flock! For it is easy to see of this dame, that she hath been high in judgment as in rank."

"And she can write and read, I had almost said, as well as your reverence," said Elspeth.

"Whom dost she write to, and what doth she read?" said the monk, angrily.

"Nay," replied Elspeth, "I cannot say I ever saw her write at all, but her maiden that was — she now serves the family — says she can write — And for reading, she has often read to us good things out of a thick black volume with silver clasps."

"Let me see it," said the monk, hastily, "on your allegiance as a true vassal — on your faith as a Catholic Christian — instantly — instantly let me see it."

The good woman hesitated, alarmed at the tone in which the confessor took up her information; and being moreover of opinion, that what so good a woman as the Lady of Avenel studied so devoutly, could not be of a tendency actually evil. But borne down by the clamour, exclamations, and something like threats used by Father Philip, she at length brought him the fatal volume. It was easy to do this without suspicion on the part of the owner, as she lay on her bed exhausted with the fatigue of a long conference with her confessor, and as the small round, or turret closet, in which was the book and her other trifling property, was accessible by another door. Of all her effects the book was the last she would have thought of securing, for of what use or interest could it be in a family who neither read themselves, nor were in the habit of seeing any who did! so that Dame Elspeth had no difficulty in possessing herself of the volume, although her heart all the while accused her of an ungenerous and an inhospitable part towards her friend and inmate. The double power of a landlord and a feudal superior was before her eyes; and to say truth, the boldness, with which she might otherwise have resisted this double authority, was, I grieve to say it, much qualified by the curiosity she entertained, as a daughter of Eve, to have some explanation respecting the mysterious volume which the lady cherished with so much care, ^{eyes} whose contents she imparted with such caution. For never had Alice of Avenel read them any passage from the book in question until the iron door of the tower was locked, and all possibility of intrusion prevented. Even then she had shewn, by the selection of particular passages, that she was more anxious to impress on their minds the principles which the volume contained, than to introduce them to it as a new rule of faith.

When Elspeth, half curious, half remorseful, had placed the book in the monk's hands, he exclaimed, after turning over the leaves, "Now, by mine order, it is as I suspected! — My mule, my mule! — I will abide no longer here — well hast thou done, dame, in placing in my hands this perilous volume."

"Is it then witchcraft or devil's work?" said Dame Elspeth, in great agitation.

"Nay, God forbid!" said the monk, signing himself with the cross, "it is the Holy Scripture. But it is rendered into the vulgar tongue, and therefore, by the order of the Holy Catholic Church, unfit to be in the hands of any lay person."

"And yet is the Holy Scripture communicated for our common salvation," said Elspeth. "Good father, you must instruct mine ignorance better; but lack of wit cannot be a deadly sin, and truly, to my poor thinking, I should be glad to read the Holy Scripture."

"I darney thou wouldest," said the monk; "and even thou did our mother Eve seek to have knowledge of good and evil, and thus sin came into the world, and Death by sin."

"I am sure, and it is true," said Elspeth. "Oh, if she had dealt by the counsel of Saint Peter and Saint Paul!"

"If she had revered the command of Heaven," said the monk, "which, as it gave her birth, life, and happiness, fixed upon the great such conditions as best corresponded with its holy pleasure. I tell thee, Elspeth, the Word slayeth — that is, the text alone, read with unskilled eye and unhallowed lips, is like those strong medicines which sick men take by the advice of the learned. Such patients recover and thrive; while those dealing in them at their own hand, shall perish by their own deed."

"Nae doubt, nae doubt," said the poor woman, "your reverence knows best."

"Not I," said Father Philip, in a tone as deferential as he thought could possibly become the Sacristan of Saint Mary's, — "Not I, but the Holy Father of Christendom, and our own holy father the Lord Abbot, know best. I, the poor Sacristan of Saint Mary's, can but repeat what I hear from others my superiors. Yet of this, good woman, be assured, — the Word — the mere Word, slayeth. But the church hath her ministers to gloze and to expound the same unto her faithful congregation; and this I say, not so much, my beloved brethren — I mean, my beloved sister," (for the Sacristan, had got unto the end of one of his old sermons,) —

"This I speak not so much of the rectors, curates, and secular clergy, so called because they live after the fashion of the *seculi* or age, unbound by those ties which sequester us from the world; neither do I speak this of the mendicant friars, whether black or gray, whether crossed or uncrossed; but of the Monks, and especially of the Monks Benedictine, reformed on the rule of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux, thence called Cistercian, of which Monks, Christian brethren — sister, I would say — great is the happiness and glory of the country in possessing the holy ministers of Saint Mary's, whereof I, though an unworthy brother, may say it hath produced more saints, more bishops, more popes — may our patrons make us thankful! — than any holy foundation in Scotland. Wherefore — But I see Martin hath my mule in readiness, and I will but salute you with the kiss of sisterhood, which maketh not ashamed, and so betake me to my toilsome return, for the glen is of bad reputation for the evil spirits which haunt it. Moreover, I may arrive too late at the bridge, whereby I may be obliged to take the river, which I observed to be somewhat waxen."

Accordingly, he took his leave of Dame Elspeth, who was confounded by the rapidity of his utterance, and the doctrine he gave forth, and by no means easy on the subject of the book, which her conscience told her she should not have communicated to any one, without the knowledge of its owner.

Notwithstanding the haste which the monk as well as his mule made to return to better quarters than they had left at the head of Glendurg; notwithstanding the eager desire Father Philip had to be the very first who should acquaint the Abbot that a copy of the book they most dreaded had been found within the *habitation*, or patrimony of the Abbey; notwithstanding, moreover, certain feelings which induced him to hurry as fast as possible through the gloomy and evil-reputed glen, still the difficulties of the road, and the rider's

want of habitude of quick motion, were such, that twilight came upon him ere he had nearly cleared the narrow valley.

It was indeed a gloomy ride. The two sides of the vale were so near, that at every double of the river the shadows from the western sky fell upon, and totally obscured, the eastern bank; the thickets of copsewood seemed to wave with a portentous agitation of boughs and leaves, and the very crags and scours seemed higher and grimmer, than they had appeared to the monk while he was travelling in daylight, and in company. Father Philip was heartily rejoiced, when, emerging from the narrow glen, he gained the open valley of the Tweed, which held on its majestic course from current to pool, and from pool stretched away to other currents, with a dignity peculiar to itself amongst the Scottish rivers; for whatever may have been the drought of the season, the Tweed usually fills up the space between its banks, seldom leaving those extensive sheets of shingle which deform the margins of many of the celebrated Scottish streams.

The monk, insensible to beauties which the age had not regarded as deserving of notice, was nevertheless, like a prudent general, pleased to find himself out of the narrow glen in which the enemy might have stolen upon him unperceived. He drew up his bridle, reduced his mule to her natural and luxurious amble, instead of the agitating and broken trot at which, to his no small inconvenience, she had hitherto proceeded, and, wiping his brow, gazed forth at leisure on the broad moon, which, now mingling with the lights of evening, was rising over field and forest, village and fortalice, and, above all, over the stately Monastery, seen far and dim amid the yellow light.

The worst part of the magnificent view, in the monk's apprehension, was, that the Monastery stood on the opposite side of the river, and that of the many fine bridges which have since been built across that classical stream, not one then existed. There was, however, in recompense, a bridge then standing which has since disappeared, although its ruins may still be traced by the curious.

It was of a very peculiar form. Two strong abutments were built on either side of the river, at a part where the stream was peculiarly contracted. Upon a rock in the centre of the current was built a solid piece of masonry, constructed like the pier of a bridge, and presenting, like a pier, an angle to the current of the stream. The masonry continued solid until the pier rose to a level with the two abutments upon either side, and from thence the building rose in the form of a tower. The lower story of this tower consisted only of an archway or passage through the building, over either entrance to which hung a drawbridge with counterpoises, either of which, when dropped, connected the archway with the opposite abutment, where the farther end of the drawbridge rested. When both bridges were thus lowered, the passage over the river was complete.

The bridge-keeper, who was the dependant of a neighbouring baron, resided with his family in the second and third stories of the tower, which, when both drawbridges were raised, formed an insulated fortress in the midst of the river. He was entitled to a small toll or custom for the passage, concerning the amount of which disputes sometimes arose

between him and the passengers. It is needless to say, that the bridge-ward had usually the better in these questions, since he could at pleasure detain the traveller on, the opposite side; or, suffering him to pass half way, might keep him prisoner in his tower till they were agreed on the rate of pontage.¹

But it was most frequently with the Monks of Saint Mary's that the warder had to dispute his perquisites. These holy men insisted for, and at length obtained, a right of gratuitous passage to themselves, greatly to the discontent of the bridge-keeper. But when they demanded the same immunity for the numerous pilgrims who visited the shrine, the bridge-keeper waxed restive, and was supported by his lord in his resistance. The controversy grew animated on both sides; the Abbot menaced excommunication, and the Keeper of the bridge, though unable to retaliate in kind, yet made each individual monk who had to cross and recross the river, endure a sort of purgatory, ere he would accommodate them with a passage. This was a great inconvenience, and would have proved a more serious one, but that the river was fordable for man and horse in ordinary weather.

It was a fine moonlight night, as we have already said, when Father Philip approached this bridge, the singular construction of which gives a curious idea of the insecurity of the times. The river was not in flood, but it was above its ordinary level—a heavy water, as it is called in that country, through which the monk had no particular inclination to ride, if he could manage the matter better.

"Peter, my good friend," cried the Sacristan, raising his voice; "my very excellent friend, Peter, be so kind as to lower the drawbridge. Peter, I say, dost thou not hear!—it is thy gossip, Father Philip, who calls thee."

Peter heard him perfectly well, and saw him into the bargain; but, as he had considered the Sacristan as peculiarly his enemy in his dispute with the convent, he went quietly to bed, after reconnoitring the monk through his loop-hole, observing to his wife, that "riding the water in a moonlight night would do the Sacristan no harm, and would teach him the value of a brig the next time, on which a man might pass high and dry, winter and summer, flood and ebb."

After exhausting his voice in entreaties and threats, which were equally unattended to by Peter of the Brig, as he was called, Father Philip at length moved down the river to take the ordinary ford at the head of the next stream. Cursing the rustic obstinacy of Peter, he began, nevertheless, to persuade himself that the passage of the river by the ford was not only safe, but pleasant. The banks and scattered trees were so beautifully reflected from the bosom of the dark stream, the whole cool and delicious picture formed so pleasing a contrast to his late agitation, to the warmth occasioned by his vain endeavours to move the reluctant porter of the bridge, that the result was rather agreeable than otherwise.

As Father Philip came close to the water's edge, at the spot where he was to enter it, there sat a female under a large broken scathed oak-tree, or rather under the remains of such a tree, weeping.

¹ See Note C. Drawbridge at Bridge-end.

wrangling her hands, and looking earnestly on the current of the river. The monk was struck with astonishment to see a female there at that time of night. But he was, in all honest service, — and if a step farther, I put it upon his own conscience, — a devoted squire of dames. After observing the maiden for a moment, although she seemed to take no notice of his presence, he was moved by her distress, and willing to offer his assistance. "Damsel," said he, "thou seemest in no ordinary distress; peradventure, like myself, thou hast been refused passage at the bridge by the churlish keeper, and thy crossing may concern thee either for performance of a vow, or some other weighty charge."

The maiden uttered some inarticulate sounds, looked at the river, and then in the face of the Sacristan. A struck Father Philip at that instant; that a Highland Chief of distinction had been for some time expected to pay his vows at the shrine of Saint Mary's; and that possibly this fair maiden might be one of his family, travelling alone for accomplishment of a vow, or left behind by some accident, to whom, therefore, it would be but right and prudent to use every civility in his power, especially as she seemed unacquainted with the Lowland tongue. Such at least was the only motive the Sacristan was ever known to assign for his courtesy; if there was any other, I once more refer it to his own conscience.

To express himself by signs, the common language of all nations, the cautious Sacristan first pointed to the river, then to his mule's crupper, and then made, as gracefully as he could, a sign to induce the fair solitary to mount behind him. She seemed to understand his meaning, for she rose up as if to accept his offer; and while the good monk, who, as we have hinted, was no great cavalier, laboured, with the pressure of the right leg and the use of the left rein, to place his mule with her side to the bank in such a position that the lady might mount with ease, she rose from the ground with rather portentous activity, and at one bound sat behind the monk upon the animal, much the firmer rider of the two. The mule by no means seemed to approve of this double burden; she bounded, bolted, and would soon have thrown Father Philip over her head, had not the maiden with a firm hand detained him in the saddle.

At length the restive brute changed her humour; and, from refusing to budge off the spot, suddenly stretched her nose homeward, and dashed into the ford as fast as she could scamper. A new terror now invaded the monk's mind — the ford seemed unusually deep, the water eddied off in strong ripple from the counter of the mule, and began to rise upon her side. Philip lost his presence of mind, which was at no time his most ready attribute; the mule yielded to the weight of the current; and as the rider was not attentive to keep her head turned up the river, she drifted downward, lost the ford and her footing at once, and began to swim with her head down the stream. And what was sufficiently strange, at the same moment, notwithstanding the extreme peril, the damsel began to sing, thereby increasing, if any thing could increase, the bodily fear of the worthy Sacristan.

I.

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
Both current and ripple are dancing in light.
We have roused the night raven, I heard him creak,
As we plashed along beneath the oak
That flings its broad branches so far and so wide,
Their shadows are dancing in midst of the tide.
"Who wakens my nestlings," the raven he said,
"My brook shall be more in his blood be red,
For a blue swan corpse is a dainty meat,
And I'll have my share with the pike and the eel."

II.

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
There's a golden gleam on the distant height;
There's a silver shower on the siders dank,
And the drooping willows that wave on the bank.
I see the Abbey, both turret and tower,
It is all astir for the vesper hour;
The monks for the chapel are leaving each cell,
But where's Father Philip, should toll the bell?

III.

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright,
Downward we drift through shadow and light,
Under you rock the eddies sleep,
Calm and silent, dark and deep,
The Kelpy has risen from the fathomless pool,
He has lighted his candle of death and of dool
Look, Father, look, and you'll laugh to see
How he gapes and glares with his eyes on three

IV.

Good luck to you! fishing, whom watch ye to-night:
A man of men or a man of might?
Is it layman or priest that must float in your cove,
(Or lover who comes to visit his love?)
Hark! I heard ye the Kelpy reply, "we pass't!" —
"God's blessing on the whorl, he lock'd the bridge fast
All that come to my cove are sunk,
Priest or layman, lover or monk."

How long the damsel might have continued to sing, or where the terrified monk's journey might have ended, is uncertain. As she sung the last stanza, they arrived at, or rather in, a broad tranquil sheet of water, caused by a strong weir or damhead, running across the river, which dashed in a broad cataract over the barrier. The mule, whether from choice, or influenced by the suction of the current, made towards the out intended to supply the convent mills, and entered it half-swimming, half-wading, and pitching the unlucky monk to and fro in the saddle at a fearful rate.

As his person flew hither and thither, his garment became loose, and in an effort to retain it, his hand lighted on the volume of the Lady of Avenel, which was in his bosom. No sooner had he grasped it, than his companion pitched him out of the saddle into the stream, where, still keeping her hand on his collar, she gave him two or three good souses in the watery fluid, so as to ensure that every other part of him had its share of wetting, and then quitted her hold when he was so near the side, that by slight effort (of a great one he was incapable) he might scramble on shore. This accordingly he accomplished, and fanning his eyes to see what had become of his extraordinary companion, she was nowhere to be seen; but still he heard, as if from the surface of the river, and mixing with the noise of the water breaking over the damhead, a fragment of her wild song, which seemed to run thus:—

Landed—landed! the black back hath won,
Else had you seen Burwick with morning sun!
Sain ye, and save ye, and little-mot ye be,
For seldom they land that go swimming with me

The ecstasy of the monk's terror could be endured no longer; his head grew dizzy, and, after

staggering a few steps onward and running himself against a wall, he sunk down in a state of insensibility.

CHAPTER VI.

*Now let us sit in converse. That these weeds
Be rooted from the vineyard of the church,
That those foul tares be sever'd from the wheat, a
We are, I trust, agreed.—Yet how to do this,
Nor hurt the wholesome crop and tender vine-plants,
Craves good advisement.*

The Reformation.

THE vesper service in the Monastery Church of Saint Mary's was now over. The Abbot had disrobed himself of his magnificent vestures of ceremony, and resumed his ordinary habit, which was a black gown, worn over a white cassock, with a narrow scapulary; a decent and venerable dress, which was well calculated to set off to advantage the portly mien of Abbot Boniface.

In quiet times no one could have filled the state of a mitred Abbot, for such was his dignity, more respectfully than this worthy prelate. He had, no doubt, many of those habits of self-indulgence which men are apt to acquire who live for themselves alone. He was vain, moreover; and when boldly confronted, had sometimes shewn symptoms of timidity, not very consistent with the high claims which he preferred as an eminent member of the church, or with the punctual deference which he exacted from his religious brethren, and all who were placed under his command. But he was hospitable, charitable, and by no means of himself disposed to proceed with severity against any one. In short, he would in other times have shambled out his term of preferment with as much credit as any other "purple Abbot," who lived easily, but at the same time decorously—slept soundly, and did not disquiet himself with dreams.

But the wide alarm spread through the whole Church of Rome by the progress of the reformed doctrines, sorely disturbed the repose of Abbot Boniface, and opened to him a wide field of duties and cares which he had never so much as dreamed of. There were opinions to be combated and refuted—practices to be inquired into—heretics to be detected and punished—the fallen off to be reclaimed—the wavering to be confirmed—scandal to be removed from the clergy, and the vigour of discipline to be reestablished. Post upon post arrived at the Monastery of St Mary's—horses reeking, and riders exhausted—this from the Privy Council, that from the Primate of Scotland, and this other again from the Queen Mother, exhorting, approving, condemning, requesting advice upon this subject, and requiring information upon that.

These missives Abbot Boniface received with an important air of helplessness, or a helpless air of importance, whichever the reader may please to term it, evincing at once gratified vanity, and profound trouble of mind.

The sharp-witted Primate of Saint Andrews had foreseen the deficiencies of the Abbot of St Mary's, and undervalued to provide for them by getting sighted into his Monastery as Sub-Prior a brother Carmelite, a man of parts and knowledge, devoted to the service of the Catholic church, and very

capable not only to advise the Abbot on occasions of difficulty, but to make him sensible of his duty in case he should, from good-nature or timidity, be disposed to shrink from it.

Father Eustace played the same part in the Monastery as the old general who, in foreign armies, is placed at the elbow of the Prince of the Blood, who nominally commands in chief, on condition of attempting nothing without the advice of his dry-nurse; and he shared the fate of all such dry-nurses, being heartily disliked as well as feared by his principal. Still, however, the Primate's intention was fully answered. Father Eustace became the constant theme and often the bugbear of the worthy Abbot, who hardly dared to turn himself in his bed without considering what Father Eustace would think of it. In every case of difficulty, Father Eustace was summoned, and his opinion asked; and no sooner was the embarrassment removed, than the Abbot's next thought was how to get rid of his advisor. In every letter which he wrote to those in power, he recommended Father Eustace to some high church preferment, a bishopric or an abbey; and as they dropped one after another, and were otherwise conferred, he began to think, as he confessed to the Sacristan in the bitterness of his spirit, that the Monastery of St Mary's had got a lifeless lease of their Sub-Prior.

Yet more indignant he would have been, had he suspected that Father Eustace's ambition was fixed upon his own mitre, which, from some attacks of an apoplectic nature, deemed by the Abbot's friends to be more serious than by himself, it was supposed might be shortly vacant. But the confidence which, like other dignitaries, he reposed in his own health, prevented Abbot Boniface from imagining that it held any concatenation with the motions of Father Eustace.

The necessity under which he found himself of consulting with his grand adviser, in cases of real difficulty, rendered the worthy Abbot particularly desirous of doing without him in all ordinary cases of administration, though not without considering what Father Eustace would have said of the matter. He scorned, therefore, to give a hint to the Sub-Prior of the bold stroke by which he had despatched Brother Philip to Glendearg; but when the vespers came without his re-appearance he became a little uneasy, the more as other matters weighed upon his mind. The feud with the warden or keeper of the bridge threatened to be attended with bad consequences, as the man's quarrel was taken up by the martial baron under whom he served; and pressing letters of an unpleasant tendency had just arrived from the Primate. Like a gouty man, who catches hold of his crutch while he curses the infirmity that reduces him to use it, the Abbot, however reluctant, found himself obliged to require Eustace's presence, after the service was over, in his house, or rather palace, which was attached to, and made part of, the Monastery.

Abbot Boniface was seated in his high-backed chair, the grotesque carved back of which terminated in a mitre, before a fire where two or three large logs were reduced to a few red glowing masses of charcoal. At his elbow, on an oaken stand, stood the remains of a roasted capon, on which his reverend had made his evening meal, flanked by a goodly store of *bourdeaux* of excellent flavour

He was gazing indolently on the fire, partly engaged in meditation on his past and present fortunes, partly occupied by endeavouring to trace towers and steeples in the red embers.

"Yes," thought the Abbot to himself, "in that red perspective I could fancy to myself the peaceful towers of Dunderman, where I passed my life ere I was called to pomp and to trouble. A quiet brotherhood we were, regular in our domestic duties; and when the frailties of humanity prevailed over us, we confessed, and were absolved by each other, and the most formidable part of the penance was the jest of the convent on the culprit. I can almost fancy that I see the cloister garden, and the pear-trees which I grafted with my own hands. And for what have I changed all this, but to be overwhelmed with business which concerns me not, to be called My Lord Abbot, and to be tutored by Father Eustace! I would these towers were the Abbey of Aberbrothwick, and Father Eustace the Abbot,—or I would he were in the fire on any terms, so I were rid of him! The Primate says our Holy Father the Pope hath an adviser—I am sure he could not live a week with such a one as mine. Then, there is no learning what Father Eustace thinks till you confess your own difficulties—No hint will bring forth his opinion—he is like a miser, who will not unbuckle his purse to bestow a farthing, until the wretch who needs it has owned his excess of poverty, and wrung out the boon by importunity. And thus I am dishonoured in the eyes of my religious brethren, who behold me treated like a child which hath no sense of its own—I will bear it no longer!—Brother Bennet,"—(a lay brother answered to his call)—"tell Father Eustace that I need not his presence."

"I came to say to your reverence, that the holy father is entering even now from the cloisters."

"Be it so," said the Abbot, "he is welcome,—remove these things—or rather, place a trencher, the holy father may be a little hungry—yet, no—remove them, for there is no good fellowship in him—Let the stoup of wine remain, however, and place another cup."

The lay brother obeyed these contradictory commands in the way he judged most seemly—he removed the carcasses of the half-sacked capon, and placed two goblets beside the stoup of Bourdeaux. At the same instant entered Father Eustace.

He was a thin, sharp-faced, slight-made little man, whose keen gray eyes seemed almost to look through the person to whom he addressed himself. His body was emaciated not only with the fasts which he observed with rigid punctuality, but also by the active and unwearied exercise of his sharp and piercing intellect;—

A dry soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the puny body to decay,
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.

He turned with conventual reverence to the Lord Abbot; and as they stood together, it was scarce possible to see a more complete difference of form and expression. The good-natured easy face and laughings of the Abbot, which even his present anxiety could not greatly ruffle, was a wonderful contrast to the thin pallid cheek and quick penetrating glance of the monk, in which an eager and keen spirit glanced through eyes to which it seemed to give supernatural lustre.

The Abbot opened the conversation by motioning to his monk to take a stool, and inviting to a cup of wine. The courtesy was declined with respect, yet not without a remark, that the vesperservice was past.

"For the stomach's sake, brother," said the Abbot, colouring a little—"you know the text."

"It is a dangerous one," answered the monk, "to handle alone, or at late hours. Out off from hunch society, the juice of the grape becomes a perilous tumpation of solitude, and therefore I ever shun it."

Abbot Beniface had poured himself out a goblet which might hold about half an English pint; but, either struck with the truth of the observation, or ashamed to act in direct opposition to it, he suffered it to remain untasted before him, and immediately changed the subject.

"The Primate hath written to us," said he, "to make strict search within our bounds after the heretical persons denounced in this list, who have withdrawn themselves from the justices which their opinions deserve. It is deemed probable that they will attempt to retire to England by our Borders, and the Primate requireth me to watch with vigilance, and what not."

"Assuredly," said the monk, "the magistrate should not bear the sword in vain—those be they that turn the world upside down—and doubtless your reverend wisdom will with due diligence second the exertions of the Right Reverend Father in God, being in the peremptory defence of the Holy Church."

"Ay, but how is this to be done?" answered the Abbot; "Saint Mary aid us! The Primate writes to me as if I were a temporal baron—a man under command, having soldiers under him! He says, send forth—scour the country—guard the passes—Truly, these men do not travel as those who would give their lives for nothing—the last who went south passed the dry-march at the Riddingburn with an escort of thirty spears, as our reverend brother the Abbot of Kelso did write unto us. How are cowls and scapularies to stop the way?"

"Your bailiff is accounted a good man-at-arms, holy father," said Eustace; "your vassals are obliged to rise for the defence of the Holy Kirk—it is the tenure on which they hold their lands—if they will not come forth for the Church which gives them bread, let their possessions be given to others."

"We shall not be wanting," said the Abbot, collecting himself with importance, "to do whatever may advantage Holy Kirk—thysell shall bear the charge to our Bailiff and our officials—but here again is our controversy with the warden of the bridge and the Baron of Malsiffot—Saint Mary! vovations do so multiply upon the House, and upon the generation, that a man wots not where to turn to! Thou didst say, Father Eustace, thou wouldst look into our evidents touching this free passage for the pilgrims?"

"I have looked into the Charters of the House, holy father," said Eustace, "and therein I find a written and formal grant of all duties and customs payable at the drawbridge of Brigton, not only by ecclesiastics of this Consecration, but by every pilgrim truly designed to accomplish his vows at this House, to the Abbot Ailford, and the Monks of the

House of Saint Mary in Kennaquhair, from that time and for ever. The deed is dated on Saint Bridget's Even, in the year of Redemption, 1187, and bears the sign and seal of the granter, Charles of Meigallot, great-great-grandfather of this baron, and purports to be granted for the safety of his own soul, and for the weal of the souls of his father and mother, and of all his predecessors and successors, being Barons of Meigallot."

"But he alleges," said the Abbot, "that the bridge-wards have been in possession of those dues, and have rendered them available for more than fifty years—and the baron threatens violence—meanwhile, the journey of the pilgrims is interrupted, to the prejudice of their own souls and the diminution of the revenues of Saint Mary. The Sacristan advised us to put on a boat; but the warden, whom thou knowest to be a godless man, has sworn the devil tear him, but that if they put on a boat on the lair's stream, he will rive her board from board—and then some say we should compound the claim for a small sum in silver." Here the Abbot paused a moment for a reply, but receiving none, he added, "But what thinkest thou, Father Eustace? why art thou silent?"

"Because I am surprised at the question which the Lord Abbot of Saint Mary's asks at the young age of his brethren."

"Youngest in time of your abode with us, Brother Eustace," said the Abbot, "not youngest in years, or I think in experience—Sub-Prior of this convent."

"I am astonished," continued Eustace, "that the Abbot of this venerable house should ask of any one whether he can alienate the patrimony of our holy and divine patroness, or give up to an unconscientious, and perhaps a heretic baron, the rights conferred on this church by his devout progenitor. Popes and councils alike prohibit it—the honour of the living, and the weal of departed souls, alike forbid it—it may not be. To force, if he dare use it, we must surrender; but never by our consent should we see the goods of the church plundered, with as little scruple as he would drive off a herd of English bees. Rouse yourself, reverend father, and doubt nothing but that the good cause shall prevail. What the spiritual sword, and direct it against the wicked who would usurp our holy rights. What the temporal sword if it be necessary, and stir up the courage and zeal of your loyal vassals."

The Abbot sighed deeply. "All this," he said, "is soon spoken by him who hath to act it not; but—" He was interrupted by the entrance of Boynet rather hastily. "The mule on which the Sacristan had set out in the morning had returned," he said, "to the convent stable all over wet, and with the saddle turned round beneath her belly."

"Sancta Maria!" said the Abbot, "our dear brother hath perished by the way!"

"It may not be," said Eustace hastily—"let the bell be tolled—cause the brethren to get torches—alarm the village—hurry down to the river—I myself will be the foremost."

The real Abbot stood astonished and agape, when at once he beheld his office filled, and saw all which he ought to have ordered, going forward at the instigation of the youngest monk in the convent. The orders of Eustace, which nobody dreamed of disputing, were carried into execution,

the necessity was prevented by the sudden apparition of the Sacristan, whose supposed danger excited all the alarm.

CHAPTER VII.

Rise out the written troubles of the brain,
Gleams the fast bosom of the perious stuff
That weighs upon the heart.

Macbeth.

WHAT betwixt cold and fright the afflicted Sacristan stood before his Superior, propped on the friendly arm of the convent miller, drenched with water, and scarce able to utter a syllable.

After various attempts to speak, the first words he uttered were,

"Swim we merrily—the moon shines bright."

"Swim we merrily!" retorted the Abbot indignantly; "a merry night have ye chosen for swimming, and a becoming salutation to your Superior!"

"Our brother is bewildered," said Eustace;—"speak, Father Philip, how is it with you?"

"Good luck to your fishing."

continued the Sacristan, making a most dolorous attempt at the tune of his strange companion.

"Good luck to your fishing!" repeated the Abbot, still more surprised and displeased; "by my halldom, he is drunken with wine, and comes to our presence with his jolly catches in his throat! If bread and water can cure this folly—"

"With your pardon, venerable father," said the Sub-Prior, "of water our brother has had enough; and methinks, the confusion of his eye is rather that of terror, than of aught unbecoming his profession. Where did you find him, Hob Miller?"

"An it please your reverence, I did but go to shut the sluice of the mill,—and as I was going to shut the sluice, I heard something groan near to me; but judging it was one of Giles Fletcher's hogs—for so please you, he never shuts his gate—I caught up my lever, and was about—Saint Mary forgive me!—to strike where I heard the sound, when, as the saints would have it, I heard the second groan just like that of a living man. So I called up my knaves, and found the Father Sacristan lying wet and senseless under the wall of our kiln. So soon as we brought him to himself a bit, he prayed to be brought to your reverence, but I doubt me his wits have gone a bell-wavering by the road. It was but now that he spoke in somewhat better form."

"Well!" said Brother Eustace, "thou hast done well, Hob Miller; only begone now, and remember a second time to pause, ere you strike in the dark."

"Please your reverence, it shall be a lesson to me," said the miller, "not to mistake a holy man for a hog again, so long as I live." And, making a bow, with profound humility, the miller withdrew.

"And now that this church is gone, Father Philip," said Eustace, "with thou tell our venerable Superior what ails thee? art thou then a creature, man! if so, we will have thee to the gall."

"Water! water! not wine," murmured the exhausted Sacristan.

"Nay," said the monk, "if that be thy complaint, wine may perhaps cure thee;" and he reached him a cup, which the patient drank off to his great benefit.

"And now," said the Abbot, "let his garments be changed, or rather let him be carried to the infirmary; for it will prejudice our health, should we hear his narrative while he stands there, steaming like arising hoar-frost."

"I will hear his adventure," said Eustace, "and report it to your reverence." And, accordingly, he attended the Sacristan to his cell. In about half an hour he returned to the Abbot.

"How is it with Father Philip?" said the Abbot; "and through what came he into such a state?"

"He comes from Glendearg, reverend sir," said Eustace; "and for the rest, he telleth such a legend, as has not been heard in this Monastery for many a long day." He then gave the Abbot the outlines of the Sacristan's adventures in the homeward journey, and added, that for some time he was inclined to think his brain was infirm, seeing he had sung, laughed, and wept, all in the same breath.

"A wonderful thing it is to us," said the Abbot, "that Satan has been permitted to put forth his hand thus far on one of our sacred brethren!"

"True," said Father Eustace; "but for every text there is a paraphrase; and I have my suspicions, that if the drenching of Father Philip cometh of the Evil one, yet it may not have been altogether without his own personal fault."

"How!" said the Father Abbot; "I will not believe that thou makest doubt that Satan, in former days, hath been permitted to afflict saints and holy men, even as he afflicted the pious Job?"

"God forbid I should make question of it," said the monk, crossing himself; "yet, where there is an exposition of the Sacristan's tale, which is less than miraculous, I hold it safe to consider it at least, if not to abide by it. Now, this Hob' the Miller hath a buxom daughter. Suppose—I say only suppose—that our Sacristan met her at the ford on her return from her uncle's on the other side, for there she hath this evening been—suppose, that, in courtesy, and to save her stripping hose and shoon, the Sacristan brought her across behind him—suppose he carried his familiarities farther than the maiden was willing to admit; and we may easily suppose, farther, that this wetting was the result of it."

"And this legend invented to deceive us!" said the Superior, reddening with wrath; "but what strictly shall it be sifted and inquired into; it is not upon us that Father Philip must hope to pass the result of his own evil practices for doings of Satan. To-morrow cite the wench to appear before us—we will examine, and we will punish."

"Under your reverence's favour," said Eustace, "that were but poor policy. As things now stand with us, the heretics catch hold of each flying report which tends to the scandal of our clergy. We must abate the evil, not only by strengthening discipline, but also by suppressing and stifling the voice of scandal. If my conjectures are true, the miller's daughter will be silent for her own sake; and your reverence's authority may also impose silence on her father, and on the Sacristan. If he is again found to afford room for throwing dishonour on his order, he can be punished with

severity, but at the same time with secrecy. For what say the Degretals! *Faciunt ostendi dum puniuntur, flagitia autem abscondi debent.*"

A sentence of Latin, as Eustace had before observed, had often much influence on the Abbot, because he understood it not fluently, and was ashamed to acknowledge his ignorance. On these terms they parted for the night.

The next day, Abbot Boniface strictly interrogated Philip on the real cause of his disaster of the previous night. But the Sacristan stood firm to his story; nor was he found to vary from any point of it, although the answers he returned were in some degree incoherent, owing to his intermingling with them ever and anon snatches of the strange damsel's song, which had made such deep impression on his imagination, that he could not prevent himself from imitating it repeatedly in the course of his examination. The Abbot had compassion with the Sacristan's involuntary frailty, to which something supernatural seemed annexed, and finally became of opinion, that Father Eustace's more natural explanation was rather plausible than just. And indeed, although we have recorded the adventure as we find it written down, we cannot forbear to add that there was a schism on the subject in the convent, and that several of the brethren pretended to have good reason for thinking that the miller's black-eyed daughter was at the bottom of the affair after all. Whichever way it might be interpreted, all agreed that it had too ludicrous a sound to be permitted to get abroad, and therefore the Sacristan was charged, on his vow of obedience, to say no more of his ducking; an injunction which, having once eased his mind by telling his story, it may be well conjectured that he joyfully obeyed.

The attention of Father Eustace was much less forcibly arrested by the marvellous tale of the Sacristan's danger, and his escape, than by the mention of the volume which he had brought with him from the Tower of Glendearg. A copy of the Scriptures, translated into the vulgar tongue, had found its way even into the proper territory of the church, and had been discovered in one of the most hidden and sequestered recesses of the Hallidome of Saint Mary's.

He anxiously requested to see the volume. In this the Sacristan was unable to gratify him, for he had lost it, as far as he recollected, when the supernatural being, as he conceived her to be, took her departure from him. Father Eustace went down to the spot in person, and searched all around it, in hopes of recovering the volume in question; but his labour was in vain. He returned to the Abbot, and reported that it must have fallen into the river or the mill-stream; "for I will hardly believe," he said, "that Father Philip's musical friend would fly off with a copy of the Holy Scriptures."

"Being," said the Abbot, "as it is, an heretical translation, it may be thought that Satan may have power over it."

"Ay!" said Father Eustace, "it is indeed his chiefest magazine of artillery, when he inspirith presumptuous and daring men to set forth their own opinions and expositions of Holy Writ. But though thus abused, the Scriptures are the source of our salvation, and are no more to be reckoned unholy, because of these rash men's proceedings,

than a powerful medicine is to be contumacious, or held poisonous, because bold and evil leeches have employed it to the prejudice of their patients. With the permission of your reverence, I would that this matter were looked into more closely. I will myself visit the Tower of Glendearg ere I am many hours older, and we shall see if any specific or white woman of the wild will venture to interrupt my journey or return. Have I your reverend permission and your blessing?" he added, but in a tone that appeared to set no great store by either.

"Thou hast both, my brother," said the Abbot; but no sooner had Eustace left the apartment, than Boniface could not help breaking on the willing ear of the Sacristan his sincere wish, that any spirit, black, white, or gray, would read the adviser such a lesson, as to cure him of his presumption in esteeming himself wiser than the whole community.

"I wish him no worse lesson," said the Sacristan, "than to go swimming fiendishly down the river with a ghost behind, and Kelpies, night-crows, and mud-eels, all waiting to have a snatch at him.

Merrily swim we, the moon shines bright!
Good luck to your fishing, when you watch you to-night!"

"Brother Philip," said the Abbot, "we exhort thee to say thy prayers, compose thyself, and banish that foolish chant from thy mind;—it is but a deception of the devils."

"I will essay, reverend Father," said the Sacristan, "but the tune lings by my memory like a bur in a beggar's rags; it mingles with the psalter—the very bells of the convent seem to repeat the words, and jingle to the tune; and were you to put me to death at this very moment, it is my belief I should die singing it.—Now swim we merrily—it is as it were a spell upon me."

He then again began to warble

"Good luck to your fishing."

And checking himself in the strain with difficulty, he exclaimed, "It is too certain—I am but a lost priest! Swim we merrily—I shall sing it at the very mass—Wo is me! I shall sing all the remainder of my life, and yet never be able to change the tune!"

The honest Abbot replied, "he knew many a good fellow in the same condition;" and concluded the remark with "ho! ho! ho!" for his reverence, as the reader may partly have observed, was one of those dull folks who love a quiet joke.

The Sacristan, well acquainted with his Superior's humour, endeavoured to join in the laugh, but his unfortunate canticle came again across his imagination, and interrupted the hilarity of his customary cup.

"By the road, Brother Philip," said the Abbot, much moved, "you become altogether intolerable! and I am convinced that such a spell could not subsist over a person of religion, and in a religious house, unless he were under mortal sin. Wherefore, say the seven penitentiary psalms—make diligent use of thy scourge and hair-cloth—refrain for three days from all food, save bread and water—I myself will abide thee, and we will see if this singing devil may be driven out of thee; at least I think Father Eustace himself could devise no better means."

The Sacristan sighed deeply, but knew reason

strance was vain. He retired therefore to his cell, to try how far psalmody might be able to drive off the sounds of the syren tune which haunted his memory.

Meanwhile, Father Eustace proceeded to the drawbridge, in his way to the lonely valley of Glendearg. In a brief conversation with the churchwarden, he had the address to render him more tractable in the controversy betwixt him and the convent. He reminded him that his father had been a vassal under the community; that his brother was childless; and that their possession would revert to the church on his death, and might be either granted to himself the warder, or to some greater favourite of the Abbot, as matters seemed to stand betwixt them at the time. The Sub-Prior suggested to him also, the necessary connection of interests betwixt the Monastery and the office which this man enjoyed. He listened with temper to his rude and churlish answers; and by keeping his own interest firm pitched in his view, he had the satisfaction to find that Peter gradually softened his tone, and consented to let every pilgrim who travelled upon foot pass free of exaction until Pentecost next; they who travelled on horseback or otherwise, consenting to pay the ordinary custom. Having thus accommodated a matter in which the weal of the convent was so deeply interested, Father Eustace proceeded on his journey.

CHAPTER VIII.

Nay, dally not with time, the wise man's treasure,
Though fools are lavish on't—the fatal Fisher
Hooks souls, while we waste moments.

Old Play.

A November mist overspread the little valley, up which slowly but steadily rode the Monk Eustace. He was not insensible to the feeling of melancholy inspired by the scene and by the season. The stream seemed to murmur with a deep and oppressed note, as if bewailing the departure of autumn. Among the scattered aspens which here and there fringed its banks, the oak-trees only retained that pallid green that precedes their russet hue. The leaves of the willows were most of them stripped from the branches, lay rustling at each breath, and disturbed by every step of the mule; while the foliage of other trees, totally withered, kept still precarious possession of the boughs, waiving the first wind to scatter them.

The monk dropped into the natural train of pensive thought which these autumnal emblems of mortal hopes are peculiarly calculated to inspire. "There," he said, looking at the leaves which lay strewn around, "in the hopes of early youth, first formed that they may soonest wither, and loveliest in spring to become most contemptible in winter; but you, ye lingers, he added, looking to a knot of beeches which still bore their withering leaves, "you are the proud plans of adventurous manhood, formed later, and still clinging to the mind of age, although it acknowledges their vanity! None lasts—none endures, save the foliage of the handy oak, which only begins to show itself when that of the east of the forest has enjoyed half its existence. A pale and decayed hue is all it pos-

ness, but still it retains that symptom of vitality to the last.—So be it with Father Eustace! The fairy hopes of my youth I have trodden under foot like those neglected rustlers—to the prouder dreams of my manhood I look back as to lofty chimeras, of which the pith and essence have long since faded; but my religious vows, the faithful profession which I have made in my maturer age, shall retain life while aught of Eustace lives. Dangerous it may be—feeble it must be—yet live it shall, the proud determination to serve the church of which I am a member, and to combat the heresies by which she is assailed.” Thus spoke, at least thus thought, a man zealous according to his imperfect knowledge, confounding the vital interests of Christianity with the extravagant and usurped claims of the Church of Rome, and defending his cause with an ardour worthy of a better.

While moving onward in this contemplative mood, he could not help thinking more than once, that he saw in his path the form of a female dressed in white, who appeared in the attitude of lamentation. But the impression was only momentary, and whenever he looked steadily to the point where he conceived the figure appeared, it always proved that he had mistaken some natural object, a white crag, or the trunk of a decayed birch-tree with its silver bark, for the appearance in question.

Father Eustace had dwelt too long in Rome to partake the superstitious feelings of the more ignorant Scottish clergy; yet he certainly thought it extraordinary, that so strong an impression should have been made on his mind by the legend of the Sacristan. “It is strange,” he said to himself, “that this story, which doubtless was the invention of Brother Philip to cover his own impropriety of conduct, should run so much in my head, and disturb my more serious thoughts—I am wont, I think, to have more command over my senses. I will repeat my prayers, and banish such folly from my recollection.”

The monk accordingly began with devotion to tell his beads, in pursuance of the prescribed rule of his order, and was not again disturbed by any wanderings of the imagination, until he found himself beneath the little fortalice of Glendearg.

Dame Glendinning, who stood at the gate, set up a shout of surprise and joy at seeing the good father. “Martin,” she said, “Jasper, where be a’ the folk!—help the right reverend Sub-Prior to dismount, and take his mule from him.—O father! God has sent you in our need—I was just going to send man and horse to the convent, though I ought to be ashamed to give so much trouble to your reverence.”

“Our trouble matters not, good dame,” said Father Eustace; “in what can I pleasure you? I came hither to visit the Lady of Avenel.”

“Well-a-day!” said Dame Alice, “and it was on her part that I had the boldness to think of summoning you, for the good lady will never be able to wear over the day!—Would it please you to go to her chamber?”

“Hath she not been shriven by Father Philip?” said the monk.

“Shriven she was,” said the Dame of Glendearg, “and by Father Philip, as your reverence truly says—but—I wish it may have been a clean shrift.—Methought Father Philip looked but meekly upon it—and there was a book which he took away

with him, that——” She paused as if unwilling to proceed.

“Speak out, Dame Glendinning,” said the Father; “with us it is your duty to have no secrets.”

“Nay, if it please your reverence, it is not that I would keep any thing from your reverence’s knowledge, but I fear I should prejudice the lady in your opinion; for she is an excellent lady—months and years has she dwelt in this tower, and none more exemplary than she; but this matter, doubtless, she will explain it herself to your reverence.”

“I desire first to know it from you, Dame Glendinning,” said the monk; “and I again repeat, it is your duty to tell it to me.”

“This book, if it please your reverence, which Father Philip removed from Glendearg, was this morning returned to us in a strange manner,” said the good widow.

“Returned!” said the monk; “How mean you?”

“I mean,” answered Dame Glendinning, “that it was brought back to the tower of Glendearg, the saints best know how—that same book which Father Philip carried with him but yesterday. Old Martin, that is my tasker and the lady’s servant, was driving out the cows to the pasture—for we have three good milk-cows, reverend father, blessed be Saint Waldeve, and thanks to the holy Monastery——”

The monk groaned with impatience; but he remembered that a woman of the good dame’s condition was like a top, which, if you let it spin on untouched, must at last come to a pause; but, if you interrupt it, by flogging, there is no end to its gyrations. “But to speak no more of the cows, your reverence, though they are likely cattle as ever were tied to a stake, the tasker was driving them out, and the lady, that is my Halbert and my Edward, that your reverence has seen at church on holidays, and especially Halbert,—for you patted him on the head and gave him a brooch of Saint Cuthbert, which he wears in his bonnet,—and little Mary Avenel, that is the lady’s daughter, they ran all after the cattle, and began to play up and down the pasture as young folk will, your reverence. And at length they lost sight of Martin and the cows; and they began to run up a little clough which we call *Corri-nan-Blain*, where there is a wee bit strip of a burn, and they saw there—Good guide us!—a White Woman sitting on the burn-side wringing her hands—so the bairns were frightened to see a strange woman sitting there, all but Halbert, who will be sixteen come Whitsuntide; and, besides, he never feared any thing—and when they went up to her—behold she was passed away!”

“For shame, good woman!” said Father Eustace; “a woman of your sense to listen to a tale so idle!—the young folk told you a lie, and that was all.”

“Nay, sir, it was more than that,” said the old dame; “for, besides that they never told me a lie in their lives, I must warn you that on the very ground where the White Woman was sitting, they found the Lady of Avenel’s book, and brought it with them to the tower.”

“That is worthy of mark at least,” said the monk. “Know you no other copy of this volume within these bounds?”

“None, your reverence,” returned Elspeth; “why

should there!—no one could read it were there twenty."

"Then you are sure it is the very same volume which you gave to Father Philip?" said the monk.

"As sure as that I now speak with your reverence."

"It is most singular!" said the monk; and he walked across the room in a musing posture.

"I have been upon nettles to hear what your reverence would say," continued Dame Glendinning, "respecting this matter—There is nothing I would not do for the Lady of Avenel and her family, and that has been proved, and for her servants to boot, both Martin and Tibb, although Tibb is not so civil sometimes as altogether I have a right to expect; but I cannot think it becoming to have angels, or ghosts, or fairies, or the like, waiting upon a lady when she is in another Conan's house, in respect, it is no ways creditable. Only thing she had to do was always done to her hand, without costing her either pains or pence, as a country body says; and besides the discredit, I cannot but think that there is no safety in having such unchancy creatures about one. But I have tied red thread round the bairns' throats," (so her fondness still called them,) "and given ilk one of them a riding-wand of rowan-tree, forby sewing up a slip of with-elm into their doublets; and I wish to know of your reverence if there be any thing mair that a lone woman can do in the matter of ghosts and fairies!—Be here! that I should have named their unlucky names twice ower!"

"Dame Glendinning," answered the monk, somewhat abruptly, when the good woman had finished her narrative, "I pray you, do you know the miller's daughter?"

"Did I know Kate Happer?" replied the widow; "as well as the beggar knows his dish—a canty quean was Kate, and a special cummer of my ain uye be twenty years syne."

"She cannot be the wench I mean," said Father Eustace; "she after whom I inquire is scarce fifteen, a black-eyed girl—you may have seen her at the kirk."

"Your reverence must be in the right; and she is my cummer's niece, doubtless, that you are pleased to speak of. But I thank God I have always been too duteous in attention to the mass, to know whether young wenches have black eyes or green ones."

The good Father had so much of the world about him, that he was unable to avoid smiling, when the dame boasted her absolute resistance to a temptation, which was not quite so liable to beset her as those of the other sex.

"Perhaps, then," he said, "you know her usual dress, Dame Glendinning?"

"Ay, ay, Father," answered the dame readily enough, "a white kirtle the wench wears, to hide the dust of the mill, no doubt—and a blue hood, that might weel be spared, for gridefulness."

"Then, may it not be she," said the Father, "who has brought back this book, and stepped out of the way when the children came near her?"

The dame paused—was unwilling to combat the solution suggested by the monk—but was at a loss to conceive why the lass of the mill should come so far from home into so wild a corner merely to leave an old book with three children, from whose observation she wished to conceal herself. Above

all, she could not understand why, since she had acquaintances in the family, and since the Dame Glendinning had always paid her muture and knaveship duly, the said lass of the mill had not come in to rest herself and eat a morsel, and tell her the current news of the water.

These very objections satisfied the monk that his conjectures were right. "Dame," he said, "you must be cautious in what you say. This is an instance—I would it were the sole one—of the power of the Enemy in these days. The matter must be sifted with a curious and careful hand."

"Indeed," said Elspeth, trying to catch and elude in with the ideas of the Sub-Prior, "I have often thought the miller's folk at the Monastery-mill were far over careless in sifting our melder, and in bolting it too—some folk say they will not stick at whiles to put in a handful of ashes amongst Christian folk's corn-meal."

"That shall be looked after also, dame," said the Sub-Prior, not displeased to see that the good old woman went off on a false scent; "and now, by your leave, I will see this lady—do you go before, and prepare her to see me."

Dame Glendinning left the lower apartment accordingly, which the monk paced in anxious reflection, considering how he might best discharge, with humanity as well as with effect, the important duty imposed on him. He resolved to approach the bedside of the sick person with reprimands, mitigated only by a feeling for her weak condition—he determined, in case of her reply, to which late examples of hardened heretics might encourage her, to be prepared with answers to their customary scruples. High fraught, also, with zeal against her unauthorized intrusion into the priestly function, by study of the Sacred Scriptures, he imagined to himself the answers which one of the modern school of heresy might return to him—the victorious refutation which should lay the disputant prostrate at the Confessor's mercy—and the healing, yet awful exhortation, which, under pain of refusing the last consolations of religion, he designed to make to the penitent, conjuring her, as she loved her own soul's welfare, to disclose to him what she knew of the dark mystery of iniquity, by which heresies were introduced into the most secluded spots of the very patrimony of the church herself—what agents they had who could thus glide, as it were unseen, from place to place, bring back the volume which the church had interdicted to the spots from which it had been removed under her express auspices; and who, by encouraging the daring and profane thirst after knowledge forbidden and useless to the laity, had encouraged the fisher of souls to use with effect his old bait of ambition and vain-glory.

Much of this premeditated disputation escaped the good father, when Elspeth returned, her tears flowing faster than her apron could dry them, and made him a signal to follow her. "How," said the monk, "is she then so near her end!—may, the church must not break or bruise, when comfort is yet possible; and forgetting his polemics, the good Sub-Prior hastened to the little apartment, where, on the wretched bed which she had occupied since her misfortunes had driven her to the Tower of Glendinning, the widow of Walter Avenel had rendered up her spirit to her Creator. "My God!" said the Sub-Prior, "and has my unfortunate dying suffered her to depart without the Church's

consolation! "Look to her, dame," he exclaimed with eager impatience; "is there not yet a sparkle of the life left!—may she not be recalled—recalled but for a moment!—Oh! would that she could express, but by the most imperfect word—but by the most feeble motion, her acquiescence in the needful task of penitential prayer!—Does she not breathe!—Art thou sure she doth not?"

"She will never breathe more," said the matron. "Oh! the poor fatherless girl—now motherless also—Oh, the kind companion I have had these many years, whom I shall never see again! But she is in heaven for certain, if ever woman went there; for a woman of better life—"

"Wo to me," said the good monk, "if indeed she went not hence in good assurance—wo to the reckless shepherd, who suffered the wolf to carry a choice one from the flock, while he busied himself with trimming his sling and his staff to give the monster battle! Oh! if in the long Hereafter, aught but weal should that poor spirit share, what has my delay cost!—the value of an immortal soul!"

He then approached the body, full of the deep remorse natural to a good man of his persuasion, who devoutly believed the doctrines of the Catholic Church. "Ay," said he, gazing on the pallid corpse, from which the spirit had parted so placidly as to leave a smile upon the thin blue lips, which had been so long wasted by decay that they had parted with the last breath of animation without the slightest convulsive tremor—"Ay," said Father Eustace, "there lies the faded tree, and, as it fell, so it lies—awful thought for me, should my neglect have left it to descend in an evil direction!" He then again and again conjured Dame Glendinning to tell him what she knew of the demeanour and ordinary walk of the deceased.

All tended to the high honour of the deceased lady; for her companion, who admired her sufficiently while alive, notwithstanding some trifling points of jealousy, now idolized her after her death, and could think of no attribute of praise with which she did not adorn her memory.

Indeed, the Lady of Avenel, however she might privately doubt some of the doctrines announced by the Church of Rome, and although she had probably tacitly appealed from that corrupted system of Christianity to the volume on which Christianity itself is founded, had nevertheless been regular in her attendance on the worship of the church, not, perhaps, extending her scruples so far as to break off communion. Such indeed was the first sentiment of the earlier reformers, who sought to have studied, for a time at least, to avoid a schism, until the violence of the Pope rendered it inevitable.

Father Eustace, on the present occasion, listened with eagerness to every thing which could lead to assure him of the lady's orthodoxy in the main points of belief; for his conscience reproached him sorely, that, instead of protracting conversation with the Dame of Glendearg, he had not instantly hastened where his presence was so necessary. "If," he said, addressing the dead body, "thou art yet free from the utmost penalty due to the followers of false doctrine—if thou dost but suffer for a time, to expiate faults done in the body, but partaking of mortal frailty more than of deadly sin, fear not that thy abode shall be long in the penal

regions to which thou mayest be doomed—if vigils—if masses—if penance—if maceration of my body, till it resembles that entranced form, which the soul hath abandoned, may assure thy deliverance." The Holy Church—the godly foundation—our blessed Patroness herself, shall intercede for one whose errors were counterbalanced by so many virtues.—Leave me, dame—here, and by her bedside, will I perform those duties which this piteous case demands!"

Elspeth left the monk, who employed himself in fervent and sincere, though erroneous prayers, for the weal of the departed spirit. For an hour he remained in the apartment of death, and then returned to the hall, where he found the still weeping friend of the deceased.

But it would be injustice to Mrs Elspeth Glendinning's hospitality, if we suppose her to have been weeping during this long interval, or rather if we suppose her so entirely absorbed by the tribute of sorrow which she paid frankly and plentifully to her deceased friend, as to be incapable of attending to the rights of hospitality due to the holy visitor—who was confessor at once, and Sub-Prior—mighty in all religious and secular considerations, so far as the vassals of the Monastery were interested.

Her barley-bread had been toasted—her choicest cask of home-brewed ale had been broached—her best butter had been placed on the hall-table, along with her most savoury ham and her choicest cheese, ere she abandoned herself to the extremity of sorrow; and it was not till she had arranged her little repast neatly on the board, that she sat down in the chimney corner, threw her checked apron over her head, and gave way to the current of tears and sobs. In this there was no grimace or affectation. The good dame held the honours of her house to be as essential a duty, especially when a monk was her visitor, as any other pressing call upon her conscience; nor until these were suitably attended to did she find herself at liberty to indulge her sorrow for her departed friend.

When she was conscious of the Sub-Prior's presence, she rose with the same attention to his reception; but he declined all the offers of hospitality with which she endeavoured to tempt him. Not her butter, as yellow as gold, and the best, she assured him, that was made in the patrimony of Saint Mary—nor the barley scones, which "the departed saint, God save her! used to say were so good"—nor the ale, nor any other eaties which poor Elspeth's stores afforded, could prevail on the Sub-Prior to break his fast.

"This day," he said, "I must not taste food until the sun go down, happy if, in so doing, I can expiate my own negligence—happier still, if my sufferings of this trifling nature, undertaken in pure faith and singleness of heart, may benefit the soul of the deceased. Yet, dame," he added, "I may not so far forget the living in my cares for the dead, as to leave behind me that book, which is to the ignorant what, to our first parents, the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil unhappily proved—excellent indeed in itself, but fatal because used by those to whom it is prohibited."

"Oh, blithely, reverend father," said the widow of Simon Glendinning, "will I give you the book, if so be I can wile it from the bairns; and indeed, poor things, as the case stands with them even

now, you might take the heart out of their bodies, and they never find it out, they are *sae begrutten*.”¹

“Give them this *mural* instead, good dame,” said the Father, drawing from his pocket one which was curiously illuminated with paintings, “and I will come myself, or send one at a jitting time, and teach them the meaning of these pictures.”

“The bonny images!” said Dame Glendinning, forgetting for an instant her grief in her admiration, “and weel I wot,” added she, “it is another sort of a book than the poor Lady of Avenel’s; and blessed might we have been this day, if your reverence had found the way up the glen, instead of Father Philip, though the Sacristan is a powerful man too, and speaks as if he would get the house fly abroad, save that the walls are gey thick. Simon’s forebears (may he and they be blessed!) took care of that.”

The monk ordered his mule, and was about to take his leave; and the good dame was still delaying him with questions about the funeral, when a horseman, armed and accoutred, rode into the little court-yard which surrounded the Keep.

CHAPTER IX.

*For since they rode among our doors
With splent or spauld and rusty spurs,
There grows no fruit into our furrows.*
Thus said John Up-on-hand.

Bannatyne MS.

THE Scottish laws, which were as wisely and judiciously made as they were carelessly and ineffectually executed, had in vain endeavoured to restrain the damage done to agriculture, by the chiefs and landed proprietors retaining in their service what were called jack-men, from the *jack*, or doublet quilted with iron which they wore as defensive armour. These military retainers conducted themselves with great insolence towards the industrious part of the community—lived in a great measure by plunder, and were ready to execute any commands of their master, however unlawful. In adopting this mode of life, they resigned the quiet hopes and regular labours of industry, for an unsettled, precarious, and dangerous trade, which yet had such charms for those once accustomed to it, that they became incapable of following any other. Hence the complaint of John Upland, a fictitious character, representing a countryman, into whose mouth the poets of the day put their general satires upon men and manners:

*They ride about in such a rage,
By forest, firth, and fack,²
With buckler, bow, and brand.
Lo! where they ride out through the rye!
The Devil wot save the company,
Quoth John Up-on-hand.*

Christie of the Clinthill, the horseman who now arrived at the little Tower of Glendearg, was one of the hopeful company of whom the poet complains, as was indicated by his “splent or spauld,” (iron-plates on his shoulder,) his rusted spurs, and his long lance. An iron skull-cap, none of the brightest, bore for distinction a sprig of the holly, which was Avenel’s badge. A long two-edged straight sword, having a handle made of polished

oak, hung down by his side. The meagre condition of his horse, and the wild and emaciated look of the rider, shewed their occupation could not be accounted an easy or a thriving one. He saluted Dame Glendinning with little courtesy, and the monk with less; for the growing disrespect to the religious orders had not failed to extend itself among a class of men of such disorderly habits, although it may be supposed they were tolerably indifferent alike to the new or the ancient doctrines.

“So, our lady is dead, Dame Glendinning!” said the jack-man; “my master has sent you even now a fat bullock for her mart—it may serve for her funeral. I have left him in the upper cleugh, as he is somewhat kenspeckle,³ and is marked both with cut and burn—the sooner the skin is off, and he is in saultat, the less like you are to have trouble—you understand me! Let me have a peck of corn for my horse, and beef and beer for myself, for I must go on to the Monastery—though I think this monk here might do mine errand.”

“Thine errand, rude man!” said the Sub-Prior, knitting his brows—

“For God’s sake!” cried poor Dame Glendinning, terrified at the idea of a quarrel between them,—“O Christie!—it is the Sub-Prior—the reverend sir, it is Christie of the Clinthill, the laird’s chief jack-man; ye know that little havings can be expected from the like o’ them.”

“Are you a retainer of the Laird of Avenel?” said the monk, addressing himself to the horseman, “and do you speak thus rudely to a brother of Saint Mary’s, to whom thy master is so much beholden?”

“He means to be yet more beholden to your house, Sir Monk,” answered the fellow; “for hearing his sister-in-law, the widow of Walter of Avenel, was on her death-bed, he sent me to say to the Father Abbot and the brethren, that he will hold the funeral-feast at their convent, and invites himself thereto, with a score of horse and some friends, and to abide there for three days and three nights,—having horse-meat and men’s-meat at the charge of the community; of which his intention he sends due notice, that fitting preparation may be timeously made.”

“Friend,” said the Sub-Prior, “believe not that. I will do to the Father Abbot the indignity of delivering such an errand.—Think’st thou the goods of the church were bestowed upon her by holy princes and pious nobles, now dead and gone, to be consumed in revelry by every profligate layman who numbers in his train more followers than he can support by honest means, or by his own incomes! Tell thy master, from the Sub-Prior of Saint Mary’s, that the Primate hath issued his commands to us that we submit no longer to this compulsory exaction of hospitality on slight or false pretences. Our lands and goods were given to relieve pilgrims and pious persons, not to feast bands of rude soldiers.”

“This to me?” said the angry spearman, “this to me and to my master—Look to yourself then, Sir Priest, and try if *Ave* and *Crede* will keep bullocks from wandering, and hay-stacks from burning.”

“Dost thou menace the Holy Church’s patrimony with waste and fire-raising,” said the Sub-Prior,

¹ *Begrutten*—over-weepled.

² *Kenspeckle*—that which is easily recognised by the eye.

"and that is the face of the sun! I call on all who hear me to bear witness to the words this ruffian has spoken. Remember how the Lord James drowned such as you by scores in the black pool at Jeddart. — To him and to the Primate will I complain." The soldier shifted the position of his lance, and brought it down to a level with the monk's body.

Dame Glendinning began to shriek for assistance. "Tibb Tacket! Martin! where be ye all! — Christie, for the love of God, consider he is a man of Holy Kirk!"

"I care not for his spear," said the Sub-Prior; "if I am slain in defending the rights and privileges of my community, the Primate will know how to take vengeance."

"Let him look to himself," said Christie, but at the same time depositing his lance against the wall of the tower; "if the Fife men spoke true who came hither with the Governor in the last raid, Norman Leslie has him at feud, and is like to set him hard. We know Norman a true bloodhound, who will never quit the slot. But I had no design to offend the holy father," he added, thinking perhaps he had gone a little too far; "I am a rude man, bred to lance and stirrup, and not used to deal with book-learned men and priests; and I am willing to ask his forgiveness and his blessing, if I have said aught amiss."

"For God's sake, your reverence," said the widow of Glendearg apart to the Sub-Prior, "bestow on him your forgiveness — how shall we poor folk sleep in security in the dark nights, if the Convent is at feud with such men as he is!"

"You are right, dame," said the Sub-Prior, "your safety should, and must, be in the first instance consulted. — Soldier, I forgive thee, and may God bless thee and send thee honesty."

Christie of the Clinthill made an unwilling inclination with his head, and muttered apart, "that is as much as to say, God send thee starvation. — But now to my master's demand, Sir Priest! What answer am I to return?"

"That the body of the widow of Walter of Avenel," answered the Father, "shall be interred as becomes her rank, and in the tomb of her valiant husband. For your master's proffered visit of three days, with such a company and retinue, I have no authority to reply to it; you must intimate your Chief's purpose to the Reverend Lord Abbot."

"That will cost me a farther ride," said the man, "but it is all in the day's work. — How now, my lad," said he to Halbert, who was handling the long lance which he had laid aside; "how do you like such a plaything! — will you go with me and be a moss-trooper?"

"The Saints in their mercy forbid!" said the poor mother; and then, afraid of having displeased Christie by the vivacity of her exclamation, she followed it up by explaining, that since Simon's death she could not look on a spear or a bow, or any implement of destruction without trembling.

"Farew!" answered Christie, "thou shouldst take another husband, dame, and drive such follies out of thy thoughts — what sayst thou to such a strapping lad as I! Why, this old tower of thine is feasible enough, and there is no want of clensha, and crags, and heags, and thickets, if one, was set hard; a man might bide here and keep his half-score of lads, and as many goldings, and live on

what he could lay his hand on, and be kind to thee, old wench."

"Alas! Master Christie," said the matron, "that you should talk to a lone woman in such a fashion, and death in the house besides!"

"Lone woman! — why, that is the very reason thou shouldst take a mate. Thy old friend is dead, why, good — choose thou another of somewhat tougher frame, and that will not die of the pip like a young chicken. — Better still — Come, dame, let me have something to eat, and we will talk mair of this."

Dame Elspeth, though she well knew the character of the man, whom in fact she both disliked and feared, could not help simpering at the personal address which he thought proper to make to her. She whispered to the Sub-Prior, "ony thing just to keep him quiet," and went into the tower to set before the soldier the food he desired, trusting, betwixt good cheer and the power of her own charms, to keep Christie of the Clinthill so well amused, that the altercation betwixt him and the holy father should not be renewed.

The Sub-Prior was equally unwilling to hazard any unnecessary rupture between the community and such a person as Julian of Avenel. He was sensible that moderation, as well as firmness, was necessary to support the tottering cause of this Church of Rome; and that, contrary to former times, the quarrels betwixt the clergy and laity had, in the present, usually terminated to the advantage of the latter. He resolved, therefore, to avoid farther strife by withdrawing, but failed not, in the first place, to possess himself of the volume which the Sacristan carried off the evening before, and which had been returned to the glen in such a marvellous manner.

Edward, the younger of Dame Elspeth's boys, made great objections to the book's being removed, in which Mary would probably have joined, but that she was now in her little sleeping-chamber with Tibb, who was exerting her simple skill to console the young lady for her mother's death. But the younger Glendinning stood up in defence of her property, and, with a positiveness which had hitherto made no part of his character, declared, that now the kind lady was dead, the book was Mary's, and no one but Mary should have it.

"But if it is not a fit book for Mary to read, my dear boy," said the Father, gently, "you would not wish it to remain with her?"

"The lady read it," answered the young champion of property; "and so it could not be wrong — it shall not be taken away. — I wonder where Halbert is! — listening to the braving tales of gay Christie, I reckon — he is always wishing for fighting, and now he is out of the way."

"Why, Edward, you would not fight with me, who am both a priest and an old man?"

"If you were as good a priest as the Pope," said the boy, "and as old as the hills to boot, you shall not carry away Mary's book without her leave. I will do battle for it."

"But see you, my love," said the monk, amused with the resolute friendship manifested by the boy, "I do not take it; I only borrow it; and I leave in its place my own gay mistal, as a pledge I will bring it again."

Edward opened the mistal with eager curiosity, and glanced at the pictures with which it was illus-

trated. "Saint George and the dragon—Halbert will like that; and Saint Michael brandishing his sword over the head of the Wicked One—and that will do for Halbert too. And see the Saint John leading his lamb in the wilderness, with his little cross made of reeds, and his scrip and staff—that shall be my favourite; and where shall we find one for poor Mary?—here is a beautiful woman weeping and lamenting herself."

"This is Saint Mary Magdalen repenting of her sins, my dear boy," said the Father.

"That will not suit our Mary; for she commits no faults, and is never angry with us, but when we do something wrong."

"Then," said the Father, "I will shew you a Mary, who will protect her and you, and all good children. See how fairly she is represented, with her gown covered with golden stars."

The boy was lost in wonder at the portrait of the Virgin, which the Sub-Prior turned up to him.

"This," he said, "is really like our sweet Mary; and I think I will let you take away the black book, that has no such goodly shows in it, and leave this for Mary instead. But you must promise to bring back the book, good Father—for now I think upon it, Mary may like that best which was her mother's."

"I will certainly return," said the monk, evading his answer, "and perhaps I may teach you to write and read such beautiful letters as you see there written, and to paint them blue, green, and yellow, and to blazon them with gold."

"Ay, and to make such figures as these blessed Saints, and especially these two Marys!" said the boy.

"With their blessing," said the Sub-Prior, "I can teach you that art too, so far as I am myself capable of shewing, and you of learning it."

"Then," said Edward, "will I paint Mary's picture—and remember you are to bring back the black book; that you must promise me."

The Sub-Prior, anxious to get rid of the boy's pertinacity, and to set forward on his return to the convent, without having any farther interview with Christie the galloper, answered by giving the promise Edward required, mounted his mule, and set forth on his return homeward.

The November day was well spent ere the Sub-Prior resumed his journey; for the difficulty of the road, and the various delays which he had met with at the tower, had detained him longer than he proposed. A chill easterly wind was sighing among the withered leaves, and stripping them from the hold they had yet retained on the parent trees.

"Even so," said the monk, "our prospects in this vale of time grow more disconsolate as the stream of years passes on. Little have I gained by my journey, saving the certainty that heresy is busy among us with more than his usual activity, and that the spirit of insulting religious orders, and plundering the Church's property, so general in the eastern districts of Scotland, has now come nearer home."

The tread of a horse which came up behind him, interrupted his reverie, and he soon saw he was mounted by the same wild rider whom he had left at the tower.

"Good even, my son, and benedictio," said the Sub-Prior as he passed; but the rude soldier

scarcely acknowledged the greeting, by bending his head; and dashing the spurs into his horse, went on at a pace which soon left the monk and his mule far behind. And there, thought the Sub-Prior, goes another plague of the times—a fellow whose birth designed him to cultivate the earth, but who is perverted by the unhallowed and unchristian divisions of the country, into a daring and dissolute robber. The barons of Scotland are now turned masterful thieves and ruffians, oppressing the poor by violence, and wasting the Church, by extorting free-quarters from abbays and priories, without either shame or reason. I fear me I shall be too late to counsel the Abbot to make a stand against these daring *cornerers*—I must make haste." He struck his mule with his riding-wand accordingly; but, instead of mending her pace, the animal suddenly started from the path, and the rider's utmost efforts could not force her forward.

"Art thou, too, infected with the spirit of the times!" said the Sub-Prior; "thou wert wont to be ready and serviceable, and art now as restive as any wild jack-man or stubborn heretic of them all."

While he was contending with the startled animal, a voice, like that of a female, chanted in his ear, or at least very close to it,

"Good evening, Sir Priest, and so late as you ride,
With your mule so fair, and your mantle so wide;
But ride you through valley, or ride you o'er hill,
There is one that has warrant to wait on you still.

Back, back,
The volume black!
I have a warrant to carry it back."

The Sub-Prior looked around, but neither bush nor brake was near which could conceal an am bushed songstress. "May Our Lady have mercy on me!" he said; "I trust my senses have not forsaken me—yet how my thoughts should arrange themselves into rhymes which I despise, and music which I care not for, or why there should be the sound of a female voice in ears, in which its melody has been so long indifferent, baffles my comprehension, and almost realizes the vision of Philip the Sacristan. Come, good mule, betake thee to the path, and let us hence while our judgment serves us."

But the mule stood as if it had been rooted to the spot, backed from the point to which it was pressed by its rider, and by her ears laid close into her neck, and her eyes almost starting from their sockets, testified that she was under great terror.

While the Sub-Prior, by alternate threats and soothing, endeavoured to reclaim the wayward animal to her duty, the wild musical voice was again heard close beside him.

"What, ho! Sub-Prior, and came you but here
To conjure a book from a dead woman's bier?
Sah you, and save you, be wary and wise,
Ride back with the book, or you'll pay for your prize
Back, back,
There's death in the track!

In the name of my master, I bid thee bear back."

"In the name of my Master," said the astonished monk, "that name before which all things created tremble, I conjure thee to say what thou art that hauntest me thus!"

The same voice replied,

"That which is neither ill nor well,
That which belongs not to Heaven nor to hell.

A wreath of the mist, a bubble of the stream,
 'Twas a waking thought and a sleeping dream;
 A form that men spy
 With the half-shut eye.
 In the beams of the setting sun, and I."

"This is more than simple fantasy," said the Sub-Prior, rousing himself; though, notwithstanding the natural hardihood of his temper, the sensible presence of a supernatural being so near him, failed not to make his blood run cold, and his hair bristle. "I charge thee," he said aloud, "be thine errand what it will, to depart and trouble me no more! False spirit, thou canst not appal any save those who do the work negligently."

The voice immediately answered:

"Vainly, Sir Prior, wouldst thou bar me my right!
 Like the star when it shoots, I can dart through the night;
 I can dance on the storm and ride on the air,
 And travel the world with the hoary night-mare."

Again, again,
 At the crook of the glen,
 Where flickers the burnie, I'll meet thee again."

The road was now apparently left open; for the mule collected herself, and changed from her posture of terror to one which promised advance, although a profuse perspiration, and general trembling of the joints, indicated the bodily terror she had undergone.

"I used to doubt the existence of Cabalists and Rosicrucians," thought the Sub-Prior, "but, by my Holy Order, I know no longer what to say!—My pulse beats temperately—my hand is cool—I am fasting from every thing but sip, and possessed of my ordinary faculties—Either some fiend is permitted to bewilder me, or the tales of Cornelius Agrippa, Paracelsus, and others who treat of occult philosophy, are not without foundation.—At the crook of the glen! I could have desired to avoid a second meeting, but I am on the service of the church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against me."

He moved around accordingly, but with precaution, and not without fear; for he neither knew the manner in which, or the place where, his journey might be next interrupted by his invisible attendant. He descended the glen without interruption for about a mile farther, when, just at the spot where the brook approached the steep hill, with a winding so abrupt as to leave scarcely room for a horse to pass, the mule was again visited with the same symptoms of terror which had before interrupted her course. Better acquainted than before with the cause of her restiveness, the Priest employed no effort to make her proceed, but addressed himself to the object, which he doubted not was the same that had formerly interrupted him, in the words of solemn exorcism prescribed by the Church of Rome on such occasions.

In reply to his demand, the voice again sung;—

"Men of good are held as madmen,
 Men of rods are wild and reckless,
 Lie their still
 In the nook of the hill,
 For those be before thee that gish thee ill."

While the Sub-Prior listened, with his head turned in the direction from which the sounds seemed to come, he felt as if something rushed against him; and ere he could discover the cause, he was pushed from his saddle with gentle but irresistible force. Before he reached the ground

his senses were gone, and he lay long in a state of insensibility; for the sunset had not ceased to gild the top of the distant hill when he fell,—and when he again became conscious of existence, the pale moon was gleaming on the landscape. He awakened in a state of terror, from which, for a few minutes, he found it difficult to shake himself free. At length he wate up on the grass, and became sensible, by repeated exertion, that the only personal injury which he had sustained was the numbness arising from extreme cold. The motion of something near him made the blood again run to his heart, and by a sudden effort he started up, and, looking around, saw to his relief that the noise was occasioned by the footsteps of his own mule. The peaceable animal had remained quietly beside her master during his trance, browsing on the grass which grew plentifully in that sequestered nook.

With some exertion he collected himself, remounted the animal, and meditating upon his wild adventure, descended the glen till its junction with the broader valley through which the Tweed winds. The drawbridge was readily dropped at his first summons; and so much had he won upon the heart of the churlish warden, that Peter appeared himself with a lantern to show the Sub-Prior his way over the perilous pass.

"By my sooth, air," he said, holding the light up to Father Eustace's face, "you look sorely travelled and deadly pale—but a little matter serves to weary out you men of the cell. I now who speak to you—I have ridden—before I was perched up here on this pillar betwixt wind and water—it may be thirty Scots miles before I broke my fast, and have had the red of a bramble rose in my cheek all the while—But will you taste some food, or a cup of distilled waters?"

"I may not," said Father Eustace, "being under a vow; but I thank you for your kindness, and pray you to give what I may not accept to the next poor pilgrim who comes hither pale and fainting, for so it shall be the better both with him here, and with you hereafter."

"By my faith, and I will do so," said Peter Bridge-Ward, "even for thy sake—It is strange now, how this Sub-Prior gets round one's heart more than the rest of these cowed gentry, that think of nothing but quaffing and stuffing!—Wife, I say,—wife, we will give a cup of distilled waters and a crust of bread unto the next pilgrim that comes over; and ye may keep for the purpose the grunds of the last greybeard," and the ill-backed hannock which the bairns couldna eat."

While Peter issued these charitable, and, at the same time, prudent injunctions, the Sub-Prior, whose mild interference had awakened the Bridge-Ward to such an act of unwonted generosity, was pacing onward to the Monastery. In the way, he had to commune with and subdue his own rebellious heart, an enemy, he was sensible, more formidable than any which the external powers of Satan could place in his way.

Father Eustace had indeed strong temptation to suppress the extraordinary incident which had befallen him, which he was the more reluctant to confess, because he had passed so severe a judgment upon Father Philip, who, as he was not

unwilling to allow, had, on his return from Glendour, encountered obstacles somewhat similar to his own. Of this the Sub-Prior was the more convinced, when, feeling in his bosom for the Book which he had brought off from the Tower of Glendour, he found it was amissing, which he could only account for by supposing it had been stolen from him during his trance.

"If I confess this strange visitation," thought the Sub-Prior, "I become the ridicule of all my brethren — I whom the Primate sent hither to be a watch, as it were, and a check upon their follies. I give the Abbot an advantage over me which I shall never again recover, and Heaven only knows how he may abuse it, in his foolish simplicity, to the dishonour and loss of Holy Kirk. — But then, if I make not true confession of my shame, with what face can I again presume to admonish or restrain others! — Avow, proud heart," continued he, addressing himself, "that the seal of Holy Church interests thee less in this matter than thine own humiliation — Yes, Heaven has punished thee even in that point in which thou didst deem thyself most strong, in thy spiritual pride and thy carnal wisdom. Thou hast laughed at and derided the inexperience of thy brethren — stoop thyself in turn to their derision — tell what they may not believe — affirm that which they will ascribe to idle fear, or perhaps to idle falsehood — sustain the disgrace of a silly visionary, or a wilful deceiver. — Be it so; I will do my duty, and make ample confession to my Superior. If the discharge of this duty destroys my usefulness in this house, God and Our Lady will send me where I can better serve them."

There was no little merit in the resolution thus piously and generously formed by Father Eustace. To men of any rank the esteem of their order is naturally most dear; but in the monastic establishment, cut off, as the brethren are, from other objects of ambition, as well as from all exterior friendship and relationship, the place which they hold in the opinion of each other is all in all.

But the consciousness how much he should rejoice the Abbot and most of the other monks of Saint Mary's, who were impatient of the unauthorised, yet irresistible control, which he was wont to exercise in the affairs of the convent, by a confession which would put him in a ludicrous, or perhaps even in a criminal point of view, could not weigh with Father Eustace in comparison with the task which his belief enjoined.

As, strong in his feelings of duty, he approached the exterior gate of the Monastery, he was surprised to see torches gleaming, and men assembled around it, some on horseback, some on foot, while several of the monks, distinguished through the night by their white scapularies, were making themselves busy among the crowd. The Sub-Prior was received with a unanimous shout of joy, which at once made him sensible that he had himself been the object of their anxiety.

"There he is! there he is! God be thanked — there he is, hale and fear!" exclaimed the vassals; while the monks exclaimed, "*Te Deum laudamus* — the blood of thy servants is precious in thy sight!"

"What is the matter, children! what is the matter, my brethren?" said Father Eustace, descending at the gate.

"Nay, brother, if thou know'st not, we will not tell thee till thou art in the refectory," answered the monks; "Suffice it that the Lord Abbot had ordered these, our zealous and faithful vassals, instantly to set forth to guard thee from imminent peril — Ye may ungirth your horses, children, and dismiss; and to-morrow, each who was at this rendezvous may send to the convent kitchen for a quarter of a yard of roast beef, and a black-jack full of double ale."

The vassals dispersed with joyful acclamation, and the monks, with equal jubilee, conducted the Sub-Prior into the refectory.

CHAPTER X.

Here we stand —
Woundless and well, may Heaven's high name be
bless'd for't!
As erst, ere treason couch'd a lance against us.

DICKENS.

No sooner was the Sub-Prior hurried into the refectory by his rejoicing companions, than the first person on whom he fixed his eye proved to be Christie of the Clithill. He was seated in the chimney-corner, fettered and guarded, his features drawn into that air of sulky and turbid resolution with which those hardened in guilt are accustomed to view the approach of punishment. But as the Sub-Prior drew near to him, his face assumed a more wild and startled expression, while he exclaimed — "The devil! the devil himself, brings the dead back upon the living!"

"Nay," said a monk to him, "may rather that Our Lady foils the attempts of the wicked on her faithful servants — our dear brother lives and moves."

"Lives and moves!" said the ruffian, rising and shuffling towards the Sub-Prior as well as his chains would permit; "nay, then I will never trust ashen shaft and steel point more — It is even so," he added, as he gazed on the Sub-Prior with astonishment; "neither wem nor wound — not as much as a rent in his frock!"

"And whence should my wound have come!" said Father Eustace.

"From the good lance that never failed me before," replied Christie of the Clithill.

"Heaven absolve thee for thy purpose!" said the Sub-Prior; "wouldst thou have slain a servant of the altar?"

"To choose!" answered Christie, "the Fifteen say, an the whole pack of ye were slain, there were more lost at Flodden."

"Villain! art thou heretic as well as murderer!"

"Not I, by Saint Giles," replied the rider; "I listened blithely enough to the Laird of Monance, when he told me ye were all cheats and knaves; but when he would have had me go hear one Wiseheart, a gospeller, as they call him, he might as well have persuaded the wild colt that had flung one rider to kneel down and help another into the saddle."

"There is some goodness about him yet," said

¹ It was one of the few remnant of Old Parr, or Henry Jenkins, I forget which, that, at some interval in the veteran's neighbourhood, the community, before the dissolution, used to dip out roast-beef by the measure of foot and fiddle.

the Sacristan to the Abbot, who at that moment entered — "He refused to hear a heretic preacher."

"The better for him in the next world," answered the Abbot. "Prepare for death, my son, — we deliver thee over to the secular arm of our battle, for execution on the Gallow-hill by peep of light."

"Amen!" said the ruffian; "'tis the end I must have come by sooner or later — and what care I whether I feed the crows at Saint Mary's or at Carlisle?"

"Let me implore your reverend patience for an instant," said the Sub-Prior; "until I shall inquire —"

"What!" exclaimed the Abbot, observing him for the first time — "Our dear brother restored to us when his life was unhopèd for! — nay, kneel not to a sinner like me — stand up — thou hast my blessing. When this villain came to the gate, accused by his own evil conscience, and crying out he had murdered thee, I thought that the pillar of our main aisle had fallen — no more shall a life so precious be exposed to such risks as occur in this border country; no longer shall one beloved and rescued of Heaven hold so low a station in the church as that of a poor Sub-Prior — I will write by express to the Primate for thy speedy removal and advancement."

"Nay, but let me understand," said the Sub-Prior; "did this soldier say he had slain me?"

"That he had transfixed you," answered the Abbot, "in full career with his lance — but it seems he had taken an indifferent aim. But no sooner didst thou fall to the ground mortally gored, as he deemed, with his weapon, than our blessed Patroness appeared to him, as he averred —"

"I averred no such thing," said the prisoner; "I said a woman in white interrupted me, as I was about to examine the priest's cassock, for they are usually well lined — she had a bulrush in her hand, with one touch of which she struck me from my horse, as I might strike down a child of four years old with an iron mace — and then, like a singing fiend as she was, she sung to me,

"Thank the holly-bush
That nods on thy brow;
Or with this slender rush
I had strangled thee now."

I gathered myself up with fear and difficulty, threw myself on my horse, and came hither like a fool, to get myself hanged for a rogue."

"Thou seest, honoured brother," said the Abbot to the Sub-Prior, "in what favour thou art with our blessed Patroness, that she herself bestows the guardian of thy path — Not since the days of our blessed founder hath she shown such grace to any one. All unworthy were we to hold spiritual superiority over thee, and we pray thee to prepare for thy speedy removal to Aberbrothwick."

"Alas! my lord and father," said the Sub-Prior, "your words pierce my very soul. Under the seal of confession will I presently tell thee why I conceive myself rather the buffeted sport of a spirit of another sort, than the protected favourite of the heavenly powers. But first let me ask this unhappy man a question or two."

"Do as ye list," replied the Abbot — "but you shall not convince me that it is fitting you remain in this inferior office in the convent of Saint Mary."

"I would ask of this poor man," said Father

Eustace, "for what purpose he nourished the thought of putting to death one who never did him evil?"

"Ay! but thou didst menace me with evil," said the ruffian, "and no one but a fool is menaced twice. Dost thou not remember what you said touching the Primate and Lord James, and the black pool of Jedwood? Didst thou think me fool enough to wait till thou hadst betrayed me to the sack and the fork! There were small wisdom in that, methinks — as little as in confiding hither to tell my own misdeeds — I think the devil was in me when I took this road — I might have remembered the proverb, 'Never Friar forget fend.'"

"And it was solely for that — for that only hasty word of mine, uttered in a moment of impatience, and forgotten ere it was well spoken!" said Father Eustace.

"Ay! for that, and — for the love of thy gold crucifix," said Christie of the Clifftill.

"Glorious Heaven! and could the yellow metal — the glittering earth — so far overcome every sense of what is thereby represented! — Father Abbot, I pray, as a dear boon, you will deliver this guilty person to my mercy."

"Nay, brother," interposed the Sacristan, "to your doom, if you will, not to your mercy — Remember, we are not all equally favoured by our blessed Lady, nor is it likely that every frock in the Convent will serve as a coat of proof when a lance is couched against it."

"For that very reason," said the Sub-Prior, "I would not that for my worthless self the community were to fall at feud with Julian of Avenel, this man's master."

"Our Lady forbid!" said the Sacristan, "he is a second Julian the Apostate."

"With our reverend father the Abbot's permission, then," said Father Eustace, "I desire this man be free from his chains, and suffered to depart uninjured; — and here, friend," he added, giving him the golden crucifix, "is the image for which thou wert willing to stain thy hands with murder. View it well, and may it inspire thee with other and better thoughts than those which referred to it as a piece of bullion. Fast with it, nevertheless, if thy necessities require, and get thee one of such coarse substance that Manneken shall have no share in any of the reflections to which it gives rise. It was the bequest of a dear friend to me; but dearer service can it never do than that of winning a soul to Heaven."

The borderer, now freed from his chains, stood gazing alternately on the Sub-Prior, and on the golden crucifix. "By Saint Giles," said he, "I understand ye not! — An ye give me gold for couching my lance at thee, what would you give me to level it at a heretic?"

"The Church," said the Sub-Prior, "will try the effect of her spiritual censures to bring these stray sheep into the fold, ere she employ the edge of the sword of Saint Peter."

"Ay, but," said the ruffian, "they say the Primate recommends a little strangling and burning in aid both of censure and of sword. But fare ye weel, I owe you a life, and it may be I will not forget my debt."

The brute now came bustling in dressed in his blue coat and bandoliers, and attended by two or three halberdiers. "I have been a thought too

late in waiting upon your reverend lordship. I am grown somewhat fatter since the field of Pinkie, and my leathern coat slips not on so soon as it was wont; but the dungeon is ready, and though, as I said, I have been somewhat late——"

Here his intended prisoner walked gravely up to the officer's nose, to his great amazement.

"You have been indeed somewhat late, baillie," said he, "and I am greatly obligated to your buff-coat, and to the time you took to put it on. If the secular arm had arrived some quarter of an hour sooner, I had been out of the reach of spiritual grace; but as it is, I wish you good even, and a safe riddance out of your garment of durance, in which you have much the air of a hog in armour."

Wroth was the baillie with this comparison, and exclaimed in ire—"An it were not, for the presence of the venerable Lord Abbot, thou knave——"

"Nay, an thou wouldst try conclusions," said Christie of the Clinthill, "I will meet thee at day-break by Saint Mary's well."

"Hardened wretch!" said Father Eustace, "art thou but this instant delivered from death, and dost thou so soon mornse thoughts of slaughter?"

"I will meet with thee ere it be long, thou knave," said the baillie, "and teach thee thine Oremus."

"I will meet thy cattle in a moonlight night before that day," said he of the Clinthill.

"I will have thee by the neck one misty morning, thou strong thief," answered the secular officer of the church.

"Thou art thyself as strong a thief as ever rode," retorted Christie; "and if the worms were once feasting on that fat carcass of thine, I might well hope to have thine office, by favour of these reverend men."

"A cast of their office, and a cast of mine," answered the baillie; "a cord and a confessor, that is all thou wilt have from us."

"Sirs," said the Sub-Prior, observing that his brethren began to take more interest than was exactly decorous in this wrangling betwixt justice and iniquity, "I pray you both to depart—Master Baillie, retire with your halberdiers, and trouble not the man whom we have dismissed.—And thou, Christie, or whatever be thy name, take thy departure, and remember thou owest thy life to the Lord Abbot's clemency."

"Nay, as to that," answered Christie, "I judge that I owe it to your own; but impute it to whom ye list, I owe a life among ye, and there is an end." And whistling as he went, he left the apartment, seeming as if he held the life which he had forfeited not worthy farther thanks.

"Obstinate even to brutality!" said Father Eustace; "and yet who knows but some better ore may lie under so rude an exterior?"

"Save a thief from the gallows," said the Sacristan—"you know the rest of the proverb; and admitting, as may Heaven grant, that our lives and limbs are safe from this outrageous knave, who shall insure our meal and our malt, our herds and our flocks?"

"Nay, that will I, my brethren," said an aged monk. "All brethren, you little know what may be made of a repentant robber. In Abbot Ingilram's days, ay, and I remember them as it were

yesterday—the freebooters were the best welcome men that came to Saint Mary's. Ay, they paid tithe of every drove that they brought over from the South, and because they were something lightly come by, I have known them make the tithe a seventh—that is, if their confessor knew his business—ay, when we saw from the tower a score of fat bullocks, or a drove of sheep coming down the valley, with two or three stout men-at-arms behind them with their glittering steel caps, and their black-jacks, and their long lances, the good Lord Abbot Ingilram was wont to say—he was a merry man—there come the tithes of the spoilers of the Egyptians! Ay, and I have seen the famous John the Armstrang—a fair man he was and a goodly, the more pity that hemp was ever heckled for him—I have seen him come into the Abbey-Church with nine tassels of gold in his bonnet, and every tassel made of nine English nobles, and he would go from chapel to chapel, and from image to image, and from altar to altar, on his knees—and leave here a tassel, and there a noble, till there was as little gold on his bonnet as on my hood—you will find no such Border thieves now!"

"No truly, Brother Nicolas," answered the Abbot; "they are more apt to take any gold the Church has left, than to bestow or bestow any—and for cattle, beahrew me if I think they care whether beehes have fed on the meadows of Lanercost Abbey or of Saint Mary's!"

"There is no good thing left in them," said Father Nicolas; "they are clean naught—Ah, the thieves that I have seen!—such proper men! and as pitiful as proper, and as pious as pitiful!"

"It skills not talking of it, Brother Nicolas," said the Abbot; "and I will now dismiss you, my brethren, holding your meeting upon this our inquisition concerning the danger of our reverend Sub-Prior, instead of the attendance on the lauds this evening—Yet let the bells be duly rung for the edification of the laymen without, and also that the novices may give due reverence.—And now, bechedicite, brethren! The cellarer will bestow on each a grace-cup and a morsel as ye pass the buttery, for ye have been turmoilled and anxious, and dangerous it is to fall asleep in such cases with empty stomach."

"*Gratias agimus quam maximas, Domine reverendissime,*" replied the brethren, depaoting in their due order.

But the Sub-Prior remained behind, and falling on his knees before the Abbot, as he was about to withdraw, craved him to hear under the seal of confession the adventures of the day. The reverend Lord Abbot yawned, and would have alleged fatigue; but to Father Eustace, of all men, he was ashamed to shew indifference in his religious duties. The confession, therefore, proceeded, in which Father Eustace told all the extraordinary circumstances which had befallen him during the journey. And being questioned by the Abbot, whether he was not conscious of any secret sin, through which he might have been subjected for a time to the delusions of evil spirits, the Sub-Prior admitted with frank avowal that he thought he might have deserved such penance for having judged with unfriendly rigour of the report of Father Philip the Sacristan.

"Heaven," said the penitent, "may have been willing to convince me, not only that he can at

pleasure open a communication betwixt us and beings of a different, and, as we word it, supernatural class, but also to punish our pride of superior wisdom, or superior courage, or superior learning."

It is well said that virtue is its own reward; and I question if duty was ever more completely recompensed, than by the audience which the reverend Abbot so unwillingly yielded to the confession of the Sub-Prior. To find the object of his fear shall we say, or of his envy, or of both, accusing himself of the very error with which he had so tacitly charged him, was at once a corroboration of the Abbot's judgment, a soothing of his pride, and an allaying of his fears. The sense of triumph, however, rather increased than diminished his natural good humour; and so far was Abbot Boniface from being disposed to tyrannize over his Sub-Prior, in consequence of this discovery, that in his exhortation he hovered somewhat ludicrously betwixt the natural expression of his own gratified vanity, and his timid reluctance to hurt the feelings of Father Eustace.

"My brother," said he, *ex cathedra*, "it cannot have escaped your judicious observation, that we have often declined our own judgment in favour of your opinion, even about those matters which most nearly concerned the community. Nevertheless, grieved would we be, could you think that we did this either because we deemed our own opinion less pregnant, or our wit more shallow, than that of our other brethren. For it was done exclusively to give our younger brethren, such as your much esteemed self, my dearest brother, that courage which is necessary to a free deliverance of your opinion,—we oftentimes setting apart our proper judgment, that our inferiors, and especially our dear brother the Sub-Prior, may be comforted and encouraged in proposing valiantly his own thoughts. Which our deference and humility may, in some sort, have produced in your mind, most reverend brother, that self-opinion of parts and knowledge, which hath led unfortunately to your over-estimating your own faculties, and thereby, subjecting yourself, as is but too visible, to the japes and mockeries of evil spirits. For it is assured that Heaven always holdeth us in the least esteem when we deem of ourselves most highly; and also, on the other hand, it may be that we have somewhat departed from what became our high seat in this Abbey, in suffering ourselves to be too much guided, and even as it were controlled, by the voice of our inferior. Wherefore," continued the Lord Abbot, "in both of its such faults shall and must be amended—you hereafter presuming less upon your gifts and carnal wisdom, and I taking heed not so easily to relinquish mine own opinion for that of one lower in place and in office. Nevertheless, we would not that we should thereby lose the high advantage which we have derived, and may yet derive, from your wise counsels, which hath been so often recommended to us by our most reverend Primate. Wherefore, on affairs of high moment, we will call you to our presence in private, and listen to your opinion, which, if it shall agree with our own, we will deliver to the Chapter, as emanating directly from ourselves; thus sparing you, dearest brother, that seeming victory which is so apt to engender spiritual pride, and avoiding ourselves the temptation of falling into

that modest facility of opinion, whereby our office is lessened and our person (were that of consequence) rendered less important in the eyes of the community over which we preside."

Notwithstanding the high notions which, as a rigid Catholic, Father Eustace entertained of the sacrament of confession, as his church calls it, there was some danger that a sense of the ridiculous might have stolen on him, when he heard his Superior, with such simple cunning, lay out a little plan for availing himself of the Sub-Prior's wisdom and experience, while he should take the whole credit to himself. Yet his conscience immediately told him that he was right.

"I should have thought more," he reflected, "of the spiritual Superior, and less of the individual." I should have spread my mantle over the frailties of my spiritual father, and done what I might to support his character, and, of course, to extend his utility among the brethren, as well as with others. The Abbot cannot be humbled, but what the community must be humbled in his person. Her boast is, that over all her children, especially over those called to places of distinction, she can diffuse those gifts which are necessary to render them illustrious."

Actuated by these sentiments, Father Eustace frankly assented to the charge which his Superior, even in that moment of authority, had rather insinuated than made, and signified his humble acquiescence in any mode of communicating his counsel which might be most agreeable to the Lord Abbot, and might best remove from himself all temptation to glory in his own wisdom. He then prayed the reverend Father to assign him such penance as might best suit his offence, intimating at the same time, that he had already fasted the whole day.

"And it is that I complain of," answered the Abbot, instead of giving him credit for his abstinence; "it is these very penances, fasts, and vigils, of which we complain; as tending only to generate airs and fumes of vanity, which, ascending from the stomach into the head, do but puff us up with vain-glory and self-opinion. It is meet and becoming that novices should undergo fasts and vigils; for some part of every community must fast, and young stomachs may best endure it. Besides, in them it abates wicked thoughts, and the desire of worldly delights. But, reverend brother, for those to fast who are dead and mortified to the world, as I and thou, is work of supererogation, and is but the matter of spiritual pride. Wherefore, I enjoin thee, most reverend brother, go to the buttery, and drink two cups at least of good wine, eating withal a comfortable morsel, such as may best suit thy taste and stomach. And in respect that thine opinion of thy own wisdom hath at times made thee less conformable to, and companionable with, the weaker and less learned brethren, I enjoin thee, during the said repast, to choose for thy companion our reverend brother Nicolas, and without interruption or impatience, to listen for a stricken hour to his narration, concerning those things which befell in the times of our venerable predecessor, Abbot Ingilram, on whose soul may Heaven have mercy! And for such holy exercises as may further advantage your soul, and expiate the faults whereof you have contritely and humbly avowed yourself guilty, we will ponder

upon that matter, and announce our will unto you the next morning."

It was remarkable, that after this memorable evening, the feelings of the worthy Abbot towards his adviser were much more kindly and friendly than when he deemed the Sub-Prior the impeccable and infallible person, in whose garment of virtue and wisdom no flaw was to be discerned. It seemed as if this avowal of his own imperfections had recommended Father Eustace to the friendship of the Superior, although at the same time this increase of benevolence was attended with some circumstances, which, to a man of the Sub-Prior's natural elevation of mind and temper, were more grievous than even undergoing the legends of the dull and verbose Father Nicolas. For instance, the Abbot seldom mentioned him to the other monks, without designing him our beloved Brother Eustace, poor man!—and now and then he used to warn the younger brethren against the snares of vain-glory and spiritual pride, which Satan sets for the more rigidly righteous, with such looks and demonstrations as did all but expressly designate the Sub-Prior as one who had fallen at one time under such delusions. Upon these occasions, it required all the votive obedience of a monk, all the philosophical discipline of the schools, and all the patience of a Christian, to enable Father Eustace to endure the pompous and patronising parade of his honest, but somewhat thick-headed Superior. He began himself to be desirous of leaving the Monastery, or at least he manifestly declined to interfere with its affairs, in that marked and authoritative manner, which he had at first practised.

CHAPTER XI.

You call this education, do you not?
Why 'tis the forced march of a herd of bullocks
Before a shouting driver. The glad van
Move on at ease, and pause a while to match
A passing marvel from the dervy greenward,
While all the blows, the cuts, the indignation,
Fall on the cranks of the ill-fated laggard
That cripples in the rear.

Old Play.

Two or three years glided on, during which the storm of the approaching alteration in church government became each day louder and more ilious. Owing to the circumstances which we have intimated in the end of the last chapter, the Sub-Prior Eustace appeared to have altered considerably his habits of life. He afforded, on all extraordinary occasions, to the Abbot, whether privately, or in the assembled Chapter, the support of his wisdom and experience; but in his ordinary habits he seemed now to live more for himself, and less for the community, than had been his former practice.

He often absented himself for whole days from the convent: and as the adventure of Glendearg dwelt deeply on his memory, he was repeatedly induced to visit that lonely tower, and to take an interest in the orphans who had their shelter under its roof. Besides, he felt a deep anxiety to know whether the volume which he had lost, when so mysteriously preserved from the lance of the murderer, had again found its way back to the Tower of Glendearg. "It was strange," he thought, "that

a spirit," for such he could not help judging the being whose voice he had heard, "should, on the one side, seek the advancement of heresy, and, on the other, interpose to save the life of a zealous Catholic priest."

But from no inquiry which he made of the various inhabitants of the Tower of Glendearg could he learn that the copy of the translated Scriptures, for which he made such diligent inquiry, had again been seen by any of them.

In the meanwhile the good father's occasional visits were of no small consequence to Edward Glendinning and to Mary Avenel. The former displayed a power of apprehending and retaining whatever was taught him, which filled Father Eustace with admiration. He was at once acute and industrious, alert and accurate; one of those rare combinations of talent and industry, which are seldom united.

It was the earnest desire of Father Eustace that the excellent qualities thus early displayed by Edward should be dedicated to the service of the church, to which he thought the youth's own consent might be easily obtained, as he was of a calm, contemplative, retired habit, and seemed to consider knowledge as the principal object, and its enlargement as the greatest pleasure, in life. As to the mother, the Sub-Prior had little doubt that, trained as she was to view the monks of Saint Mary's with such profound reverence, she would be but too happy in an opportunity of enrolling one of her sons in its honoured community. But the good Father proved to be mistaken in both these particulars.

When he spoke to Elspeth Glendinning of that which a mother best loves to hear—the proficiency and abilities of her son—she listened with a delighted ear. But when Father Eustace hinted at the duty of dedicating to the service of the church, talents which seemed fitted to defend and adorn it, the dame endeavoured always to shift the subject; and when pressed farther, enlarged on her own incapacity, as a lone woman, to manage the fen; on the advantage which her neighbours of the township were often taking of her unprotected state, and on the wish she had that Edward might fill his father's place, remain in the tower, and close her eyes.

On such occasions the Sub-Prior would answer, that even in a worldly point of view the welfare of the family would be best consulted by one of the sons entering into the community of Saint Mary's, as it was not to be supposed that he would fail to afford his family the important protection which he could then easily extend towards them. What could be a more pleasing prospect than to see him high in honour! or what more sweet than to have the last duties rendered to her by a son, reared for his holiness of life and exemplary manners? Besides, he endeavoured to impress upon the dame that her eldest son, Halbert, whose bold temper and headstrong indulgence of a wandering humour, rendered him incapable of learning, was for that reason, as well as that he was her eldest born, fittest to bustle through the affairs of the world, and manage the little fen.

Elspeth durst not directly dissent from what was proposed, for fear of giving displeasure, and yet she always had something to say against it. Halbert, she said, was not like any of the neighbour boys—

he was taller by the head, and stronger by the half, than any boy of his years within the Hallidome. But he was fit for no peaceful work that could be devised. If he liked a book ill, he liked a plough or a cattle worse. He had scoured his father's old broadsword—suspended it by a belt round his waist, and seldom stirred without it. He was a sweet boy and a gentle if spoken fair, but cross him and he was a born devil. "In a word," she said, bursting into tears, "deprive me of Edward, good father, and ye bereave my house of prop and pillar; for my heart tells me that Halbert will take to his father's gates, and die his father's death."

When the conversation came to this crisis, the good-humoured monk was always content to drop the discussion for the time, trusting some opportunity would occur of removing her prejudices, for such he thought them, against Edward's proposed destination.

When, leaving the mother, the Sub-Prior addressed himself to the son, animating his zeal for knowledge, and pointing out how amply it might be gratified should he agree to take holy orders, he found the same repugnance which Dame Elspeth had exhibited. Edward pleaded a want of sufficient vocation to so serious a profession—his reluctance to leave his mother, and other objections, which the Sub-Prior treated as evasive.

"I plainly perceive," he said one day, in answer to them, "that the devil has his factors as well as Heaven, and that they are equally, oh, alas! the former are perhaps more active, in bespeaking for their master the first of the market. I trust, young man, that neither idleness, nor licentious pleasure, nor the love of worldly gain and worldly grandeur, the chief baits with which the great Fisher of souls conceals his hook, are the causes of your declining the career to which I would incite you. But above all I trust—above all I hope—that the vanity of superior knowledge—a sin with which those who have made proficiency in learning are most frequently beset—has not led you into the awful hazard of listening to the dangerous doctrines which are now afloat concerning religion. Better for you that you were as grossly ignorant as the beasts which perish, than that the pride of knowledge should induce you to lend an ear to the voice of the heretics." Edward Glendinning listened to the rebuke with a downcast look, and failed not, when it was concluded, earnestly to vindicate himself from the charge of having pushed his studies into any subjects which the Church inhibited; and so the monk was left to form vain conjectures respecting the cause of his reluctance to embrace the monastic state.

It is an old proverb, used by Chaucer, and quoted by Elizabeth, that "the greatest clerks are not the wisest men;" and it is as true as if the poet had not rhymed, or the queen reasoned on it. If Father Eustace had not had his thoughts turned so much to the progress of hersey, and so little to what was passing in the tower, he might have read, in the speaking eyes of Mary Avenel, now a girl of fourteen or fifteen, reasons which might incline her youthful compassion towards the monastic vows. I have said, that she also was a promising pupil of the good father, upon whom her innocent and infantine beauty had an effect of which he was himself, perhaps, unconscious. Her rank and expectations entitled her to be taught the arts of reading and

writing;—and each lesson which the monk assigned her was signed over in company with Edward, and by him explained and re-explained, and again illustrated, until she became perfectly mistress of it.

In the beginning of their studies, Halbert had been their school companion. But the boldness and impatience of his disposition soon quarrelled with an occupation in which, without assiduity and unremitting attention, no progress was to be expected. The Sub-Prior's visits were at irregular intervals, and often weeks would intervene between them, in which case Halbert was sure to forget all that had been proscribed for him to learn, and much which he had partly acquired before. His deficiencies on these occasions gave him pain, but it was not of that sort which produces amendment.

For a time, like all who are fond of idleness, he endeavoured to detach the attention of his brother and Mary Avenel from their task, rather than to learn his own, and such dialogues as the following would ensue.

"Take your bonnet, Edward, and make haste—the Laird of Colnachie is at the head of the glen with his hounds."

"I care not, Halbert," answered the younger brother; "two brace of dogs may kill a deer without my being there to see them, and I must help Mary Avenel with her lesson."

"Ay! you will labour at the monk's lessons till you turn monk yourself," answered Halbert—"Mary, will you go with me, and I will show you the cushat's nest I told you of?"

"I cannot go with you, Halbert," answered Mary, "because I must study this lesson—it will take me long to learn it—I am sorry I am so dull, for if I could get my task as fast as Edward, I should like to go with you."

"Should you indeed?" said Halbert; "then I will wait for you—and, what is more, I will try to get my lesson also."

With a smile and a sigh he took up the primers, and began heavily to con over the task which had been assigned him. As if banished from the society of the two others, he sat sad and solitary in one of the deep window-recesses, and after in vain struggling with the difficulties of his task, and his disinclination to learn it, he found himself involuntarily engaged in watching the movements of the other two students, instead of telling any longer.

The picture which Halbert looked upon was delightful in itself, but somehow or other it afforded very little pleasure to him. The beautiful girl, with looks of simple, yet earnest anxiety, was bent on disentangling those intricacies which obstructed her progress to knowledge, and looking ever and anon to Edward for assistance, while, seated close by her side, and watchful to remove every obstacle from her way, he seemed at once to be proud of the progress which his pupil made, and of the assistance which he was able to render her. There was a bond betwixt them, a steady and interesting tie, the desire of obtaining knowledge, the pride of surmounting difficulties.

Feeling most acutely, yet ignorant of the nature and source of his own emotions, Halbert could no longer endure to look upon this quiet scene, but, starting up, dashed his book from him, and exclaimed aloud, "To the glen I become! all

books, and the dreamers that make them!—I would a score of Southrons would come up the glen, and we should learn how little all this muttering and scribbling is worth.”

Mary Avenel and his brother started, and looked at Halbert with surprise, while he went on with great animation, his features swelling, and the tears starting into his eyes as he spoke.—“Yes, Mary—I wish a score of Southrons came up the glen this very day; and you should see one good hand, and one good sword, do more to protect you, than all the books that were ever opened, and all the pens that ever grew on a goose’s wing.”

Mary looked a little surprised and a little frightened at his vehemence, but instantly replied affectionately, “You are vexed, Halbert, because you do not get your lesson so fast as Edward can; and so am I, for I am as stupid as you.—But come, and Edward shall sit betwixt us and teach us.”

“He shall not teach me,” said Halbert, in the same angry mood; “I never can teach him to do any thing that is honourable and manly, and he shall not teach me any of his monkish tricks.—I hate the monks, with their drawling nasal tone like so many frogs, and their long black petticoats like so many women, and their reverences, and their lodgings, and their lazy vassals, that do nothing but peddle in the mire with plough and harrow from Yule to Michaelmas. I will call none lord, but him who wears a sword to make his title good; and I will call none man, but he that can bear himself manlike and masterful.”

“For Heaven’s sake, peace, brother!” said Edward; “if such words were taken up and reported out of the house, they would be our mother’s ruin.”

“Report them yourself then, and they will be your making, and nobody’s marring save mine own. Say that Halbert Glendinning will never be vassal to an old man with a owl and glaven crown, while there are twenty barons who wear casque and plume that lack bold followers. Let them grant you these wretched acres, and much meal may they bear you to make your brooches.” He left the room hastily, but instantly returned, and continued to speak with the same tone of quick and irritated feeling. “And you need not think so much, neither of you, and especially you, Edward, need not think so much of your parchment book there, and your cunning in reading it. By my faith, I will soon learn to read as well as you; and—for I know a better teacher than your grim old monk, and a better book than his printed breviary; and since you like scholarship so well, Mary Avenel, you shall see whether Edward or I have most of it.” He left the apartment, and came not again.

“What can be the matter with him?” said Mary, following Halbert with her eyes from the window, as with hasty and unequal steps he ran up the wild glen.—“Where can your brother be going, Edward?—what book?—what teacher does he talk of?”

“It avails not guessing,” said Edward. “Halbert is angry, he knows not why, and speaks of he knows not what; let us go again to our lessons, and he will come home when he has tired himself with scribbling among the crags as usual.”

But Mary’s anxiety on account of Halbert became more deeply rooted. She declined prosecuting the task in which they had been so pleas-

ingly engaged, under the excuse of a headache; nor could Edward prevail upon her to resume it again that morning.

Meanwhile Halbert, his head unbonnected, his features swelled with jealous anger, and the tear still in his eye, sped up the wild and upper extremity of the little valley of Glendearg with the speed of a roebuck, choosing, as if in desperate defiance of the difficulties of the way, the wildest and most dangerous paths, and voluntarily exposing himself a hundred times to dangers which he might have escaped by turning a little aside from them. It seemed as if he wished his course to be as straight as that of the arrow to its mark.

He arrived at length in a narrow and secluded cluch, or deep ravine, which ran down into the valley, and contributed a scanty rivulet to the supply of the brook with which Glendearg is watered. Up this he sped with the same precipitate haste which had marked his departure from the tower, nor did he pause and look around until he had reached the fountain from which the rivulet had its rise.

Here Halbert stood short, and cast a gloomy, and almost a frightened glance around him. A huge rock rose in front, from a cleft of which grew a wild holly-tree, whose dark green branches rustled over the spring which arose beneath. The banks on either hand rose so high, and approached each other so closely, that it was only when the sun was at its meridian height, and during the summer solstice, that its rays could reach the bottom of the glasm in which he stood. But it was now summer, and the hour was noon, so that the unwonted reflection of the sun was dancing in the pellucid fountain.

“It is the season and the hour,” said Halbert to himself; “and now I—I might soon become wiser than Edward with all his pains! Mary should see whether he alone is fit to be consulted, and to sit by her side, and hang over her as she reads, and point out every word and every letter. And she loves me better than him—I am sure she does—for she comes of noble blood, and scorns sloth and cowardice.—And do I myself not stand here slothful and cowardly as any priest of them all?—Why should I fear to call upon this form—this shape?—Already have I endured the vision, and why not again?—What can it do to me, who am a man of lith and limb, and have by my side my father’s sword? Does my heart beat—do my hairs bristle, at the thought of calling up a painted shadow, and how should I face a band of Southrons in flesh and blood? By the soul of the first Glendinning, I will make proof of the charm!”

He cast the leathern brogue or buskin from his right foot, planted himself in a firm posture, unsheathed his sword, and first looking around to collect his resolution, he bowed three times deliberately towards the holly-tree, and as often to the little fountain repeating at the same time, with a determined voice, the following rhyme:

“Thrice to the holly brake—
Thrice to the well—
I bid thee awake,
White Maid of Avenel!”

Now glance on the Lather—
Now glow on the Fath—
Wake thee, O mine,
White Maid of Avenel!”

Those lines were hardly uttered, when there stood the figure of a female clothed in white, within three steps of Halbert Glendinning.

"I guess 'twas frightful there to see
A lady richly clad as she—
Beautiful exceedingly!"

CHAPTER XII.

There's something in that ancient superstition,
Which, erring as it is, our fancy loves.
The spring that, with its thousand crystal bubbles,
Bursts from the bosom of some desert rock
In secret solitude, may well be deem'd
The haunt of something purer, more refined,
And mightier than ourselves.

Old Play.

Young Halbert Glendinning had scarcely pronounced the mystical rhymes, than, as we have mentioned in the conclusion of the last chapter, an appearance, as of a beautiful female, dressed in white, stood within two yards of him. His terror for the moment overcame his natural courage, as well as the strong resolution which he had formed, that the figure which he had now twice seen should not a third time daunt him. But it would seem there is something thrilling and abhorrent to flesh and blood, in the consciousness that we stand in presence of a being in form like to ourselves, but so different in faculties and nature, that we can neither understand its purposes, nor calculate its means of pursuing them.

Halbert stood silent and gasped for breath, his hairs erecting themselves on his head—his mouth open—his eyes fixed, and, as the sole remaining sign of his late determined purpose, his sword pointed towards the apparition. At length, with a voice of ineffable sweetness, the White Lady, for by that name we shall distinguish this being, sung, or rather chanted, the following lines:—

"Youth of the dark eye, wherefore didst thou call me?
Wherefore art thou here, if terrors can appal thee?
He that seeks to deal with us must know our fear nor failing:
To coward and churl our speech is dark, our gifts are un-
availing.
The breeze that brought me hither now, must sweep Egypt-
dust ground,
The fleecy cloud on which I ride for Araby is bound:
The fleecy cloud is drifting by, the breeze sighs for my stay,
For I must sail a thousand miles before the close of day."

The astonishment of Halbert began once more to give way to his resolution, and he gained voice enough to say, though with a faltering accent, "In the name of God, what art thou?" The answer was in melody of a different tone and measure:—

"What I am I must not shew—
What I am thou couldst not know—
Something betwixt heaven and hell—
Something that neither stood nor fell—
Something that through thy wit or will
May work thee good—may work thee ill.
Neither substance quite, nor shadow,
Haunting lonely mead and fenowd,
Dancing by the haunted spring,
Riding on the whirlwind's wing;
Ape in fantastic fashion
Every change of human passion,
While o'er our frozen minds they pass,
Like shadows from the mirror'd glass.
Wayward, doleful is our mood,
Horrible betwixt bad and good,
Happier than brief-dated men,
Living twenty times his span;

Coleridge's Chthonic.

Far less happy, for we have
Died nor hope beyond the grave!
Man awakes to joy or sorrow:
Thus the sleep that knows no morrow.
This is all that I can shew—
This is all that thou mayest know."

The White Lady paused, and appeared to await an answer; but, as Halbert hesitated how to frame his speech, the vision seemed gradually to fade, and become more and more incorporeal. Justly guessing this to be a symptom of her disappearance, Halbert compelled himself to say,—"Lady, when I saw you in the glen, and when you brought back the black book of Mary of Avenel, thou didst say I should one day learn to read it."

The White Lady replied,

"Ay! and I taught thee the word and the spell,
To awaken me here by the Fairies' Well.
But thou hast loved the heron and hawk,
More than to seek my haunted walk;
And thou hast loved the lance and the spear,
More than good text and holy word;
And thou hast loved the deer to track,
More than the lines and the letters black;
And thou art a ranger of moss and of wood,
And scornest the nurture of gentle blood."

"I will do so no longer, fair maiden," said Halbert; "I desire to learn; and thou didst promise me, that when I did so desire, thou wouldst be my helper; I am no longer afraid of thy presence, and I am no longer regardless of instruction." As he uttered these words, the figure of the White Maiden grew gradually as distinct as it had been at first; and what had well-nigh faded into an ill-defined and colourless shadow, again assumed an appearance at least of corporeal consistency, although the hues were less vivid, and the outline of the figure less distinct and defined—so at least it seemed to Halbert—than those of an ordinary inhabitant of the earth. "Wilt thou grant my request," he said, "fair Lady, and give to my keeping the holy book which Mary of Avenel has so often wept for?"

The White Lady replied:

"Thy heaven fear my truth accused,
Thine illhood my trust abused;
He that draws to harbour late,
Must sleep without, or burst the gate.
There is a star for thee which burn'd,
Its influence wanes, its course is turn'd;
Valour and constancy alone
Can bring thee back the chance that's flown."

"If I have been a loiterer, Lady," answered young Glendinning, "thou shalt now find me willing to press forward with double speed. Other thoughts have filled my mind, other thoughts have engaged my heart, within a brief period—and by Heaven, other occupations shall henceforward fill up my time. I have lived in this day the space of years—I came hither a boy—I will return a man—a man, such as may converse not only with his own kind, but with whatever God permits to be visible to him. I will learn the contents of that mysterious volume—I will learn why the Lady of Avenel loved it—why the priests feared, and would have stolen it—why thou didst twice recover it from their hands.—What mystery is wrapt in it!—Speak! I conjure thee!" The lady assumed an air peculiarly sad and solemn, as drooping her head, and folding her arms on her bosom, she replied:

"Within that awful volume lies
The mystery of mystery!
Happiest they of human race,
To whom God has granted grace."

To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch, and force the way;
And better had they ne'er been born,
Who read to doubt, or read to scorn."

"Give me the volume, Lady," said young Glendinning. "They call me idle—they call me dull—in this pursuit my industry shall not fail, nor, with God's blessing, shall my understanding. Give me the volume." The apparition again replied:

"Many a fathom dark and deep
I have laid the book to sleep;
Ethereal fires around it glowing—
Ethereal music ever flowing—
The sacred pledge of Heav'n's
All things revere,
Each in his sphere,
Have man for whom 'twas giv'n:
Lend thy hand, and thou shalt say
Things ne'er seen by mortal eye."

Halbert Glendinning boldly reached his hand to the White Lady.

"Farest thou to go with me?" she said, as his hand trembled at the soft and cold touch of her own—

"Farest thou to go with me?
Still it is free to thee
A peasant to dwell;
Thou mayst drive the dull steer,
And chase the king's deer,
But never more come near
This haunted well."

"If what thou sayest be true," said the undaunted boy, "my destinies are higher than thine own. There shall be neither well nor wood which I dare not visit. No fear of aught, natural or supernatural, shall bar my path through my native valley."

He had scarce uttered the words, when they both descended through the earth with a rapidity which took away Halbert's breath and every other sensation, saving that of being hurried on with the utmost velocity. At length they stopped with a shock so sudden, that the mortal journeyer through this unknown space must have been thrown down with violence, had he not been upheld by his supernatural companion.

It was more than a minute, ere, looking around him, he beheld a grotto, or natural cavern, composed of the most splendid spars and crystals which returned in a thousand prismatic hues the light of a brilliant flame that glowed on an altar of alabaster. This altar, with its fire, formed the central point of the grotto, which was of a round form, and very high in the roof, resembling in some respects the dome of a cathedral. Corresponding to the four points of the compass, there went off four long galleries, or arcades, constructed of the same brilliant materials with the dome itself, and the termination of which was lost in darkness.

No human imagination can conceive, or words suffice to describe, the glorious radiance, which, shot fiercely forth by the flame, was returned from so many hundred thousand points of reflection, afforded by the sparry pillars and their numerous angular crystals. The fire itself did not remain steady and unmoved, but rose and fell, sometimes ascending in a brilliant pyramid of condensed flame half way up the lofty expanse, and again fading into a softer and more rosy hue, and hovering, as it were, on the surfaces of the altar to collect its strength for another powerful exertion. There was no visible fuel by which it was fed, nor did it emit either smoke or vapour of any kind.

What was of all the most remarkable, the black volume so often mentioned lay not only unconsumed, but untouched in the slightest degree, amid this intensity of fire, which, while it seemed to be of force sufficient to melt adamant, had no effect whatever on the sacred book thus subjected to its utmost influence.

The White Lady, having paused long enough to let young Glendinning take a complete survey of what was around him, now said in her usual chant,

"Here lies the volume thou boldly hast sought;
Touch it, and take it,—'twill dearly be bought!"

Familiarized in some degree with marvels, and desperately desirous of shewing the courage he had boasted, Halbert plunged his hand, without hesitation, into the flame, trusting to the rapidity of the motion, to snatch out the volume before the fire could greatly affect him. But he was much disappointed. The flame instantly caught upon his sleeve, and though he withdrew his hand immediately, yet his arm was so dreadfully scorched, that he had well-nigh screamed with pain. He suppressed the natural expression of anguish, however, and only intimated the agony which he felt by a contortion and a muttered groan. The White Lady passed her cold hand over his arm, and, ere she had finished the following metrical chant, his pain had entirely gone, and the mark of the scorching was visible:

"Hush thy deed,
Mortal woe
To immortal flames applying;
Rasher trust
Has thing of dust,
On his own weak worth relying:
Strip thee of such fencible vain,
Strip, and prove thy luck again."

Obedient to what he understood to be the meaning of his conductress, Halbert bared his arm to the shoulder, throwing down the remains of his sleeve, which no sooner touched the floor on which he stood than it collected itself together, shrivelled itself up, and was without any visible fire reduced to light tinder, which a sudden breath of wind dispersed into empty space. The White Lady, observing the surprise of the youth, immediately repeated—

"Mortal warp and mortal woof,
Cannot brook this charmed roof;
All that mortal art hath wrought,
In our cell returns to naught.
The molten gold returns to clay,
The polish'd diamond melts away;
All is alter'd all is flown,
Naught stands fast but truth alone.
Not for that thy quest give o'er:
Courage! prove thy chance once more."

Imboldened by her words, Halbert Glendinning made a second effort, and, plunging his bare arm into the flame, took out the sacred volume without feeling either heat or inconvenience of any kind. Astonished, and almost terrified at his own success, he beheld the flame collect itself, and shoot up into one long and final stream, which seemed as if it would ascend to the very roof of the cavern, and then, sinking as suddenly, became totally extinguished. The deepest darkness ensued; but Halbert had no time to consider his situation, for the White Lady had already caught his hand, and they ascended to upper air with the same velocity with which they had sunk into the earth.

They stood by the fountain in the Corri-nan-

sham when they emerged from the bowels of the earth; but on casting a bewildered glance around him, the youth was surprised to observe, that the shadows had fallen far to the east, and that the day was well-nigh spent. He gazed on his conductress for explanation, but her figure began to fade before his eyes—her cheeks grew paler, her features less distinct, her form became shadowy, and blended itself with the mist which was ascending the hollow ravine. What had lost the symmetry of form, and the delicate, yet clear hues of feminine beauty, now resembled the fitting and pale ghost of some maiden who has died for love, as it is seen indistinctly and by moonlight, by her perjured lover.

"Stay, spirit!" said the youth, imboldened by his success in the subterranean dome, "thy kindness must not leave me, as one encumbered with a weapon he knows not how to wield. Thou must teach me the art to read, and to understand this volume; else what avails it me that I possess it?"

But the figure of the White Lady still waned before his eye, until it became an outline as pale and indistinct as that of the moon, when the winter morning is far advanced, and ere she had ended the following chant, she was entirely invisible—

"Alas! alas!
Not ours the grace
These holy characters to trace:
Idle form of painted air,
Not to us is given to share
The boon bestow'd on Adam's race!
With patience bide,
Heaven will provide
The fitting time, the fitting guide."

The form was already gone, and now the voice itself had melted away in melancholy cadence, softening, as if the Being who spoke had been slowly wafted from the spot where she had commenced her melody.

It was at this moment that Halbert felt the extremity of the terror which he had hitherto so manfully suppressed. The very necessity of exertion had given him spirit to make it, and the presence of the mysterious Being, while it was a subject of fear in itself, had nevertheless given him the sense of protection being near to him. It was when he could reflect with composure on what had passed, that a cold tremor shot across his limbs, his hair bristled, and he was afraid to look around lest he should find at his elbow something more frightful than the first vision. A breeze arising suddenly realized the beautiful and wild idea of the most imaginative of our modern bards—

"It fan'd his cheek, it raised his hair,
Like a meadow gale in spring;
It mingled strangely with his fears,
Yet it felt like a welcoming."

The youth stood silent and astonished for a few moments. It seemed to him that the extraordinary Being he had seen, half his terror, half his protector, was still hovering on the gale which swept past him, and that she might again make herself sensible to his organs of sight. "Speak!" he said, wildly tossing his arms, "speak yet again—be once more present, lovely vision!—thrice have I now seen thee, yet the idea of thy invisible presence around or beside me, makes my heart beat faster than if the earth yawned and gave up a demon."

Coleridge.

But neither sound nor appearance indicated the presence of the White Lady, and nothing preternatural beyond what he had already witnessed, was again audible or visible. Halbert, in the meanwhile, by the very exertion of again inviting the presence of this mysterious Being, had recovered his natural audacity. He looked around once more, and resumed his solitary path down the valley into whose recesses he had penetrated.

Nothing could be more strongly contrasted than the storm of passion with which he had bounded over stock and crag, in order to plunge himself into the Corri-nah-Shian, and the sobered mood in which he now returned homeward, industriously seeking out the most practicable path, not from a wish to avoid danger, but that he might not by personal toil distract his attention, deeply fixed on the extraordinary scene which he had witnessed. In the former case, he had sought by hard and bodily exertion to indulge at once the fiery excitation of passion, and, to banish the cause of the excitement from his recollection; while now he studiously avoided all interruption to his contemplative walk, lest the difficulty of the way should interfere with, or disturb, his own deep reflections. Thus slowly pacing forth his course, with the air of a pilgrim rather than of a deer-hunter, Halbert about the close of the evening regained his paternal tower.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Miller was of manly make,
To meet him was no mow;
There durst na ten come him to take,
Nae noited he their pow.
Christ's Kirk on the Green.

It was after sunset, as we have already stated, when Halbert Glendinning returned to the abode of his father. The hour of dinner was at noon, and that of supper about an hour after sunset at this period of the year. The former had passed without Halbert's appearing; but this was no uncommon circumstance; for the chase, or any other pastime which occurred, made Halbert a frequent neglecter of hours; and his mother, though angry and disappointed when she saw him not at table, was so much accustomed to his occasional absence, and knew so little how to teach him more regularly, that a testy observation was almost all the censure with which such omissions were visited.

On the present occasion, however, the wrath of good Dame Elspeth soared higher than usual. It was not merely on account of the special tap's-head and trotters, the haggis and the side of mutton, with which her table was set forth; but also because of the arrival of no less a person than Bob Miller, as he was universally termed, though the man's name was Happer.

The object of the Miller's visit to the Tower of Glendearg was like the purpose of those embassies which potentates send to each other's courts, partly ostensible, partly politic. In outward show, Bob came to visit his friends of the Halidoms, and share the festivity common among country folk, after the barn-yard has been filled, and to renew old intimacies by new conviviality. But in very truth he also came to have an eye upon the contents of

each stack, and to obtain such information respecting the extent of the crop reaped, and gathered in by each tenant, as might prevent the possibility of *abstracted multures*.

All the world knows that the cultivators of each barony or regality, temporal or spiritual, in Scotland, are obliged to bring their corn to be "grinded at the mill of the territory, for which they pay a heavy charge, called the *intown multures*. I could speak to the thirlage of *insects et illata* too, but let that pass. I have said enough to intimate that I talk not without book. Those of the *Sucken*, or enthrall'd ground, were liable in penances, if, deviating from this thirlage, (or thraldom,) they carried their grain to another mill. Now such another mill, erected on the lands of a lay-baron, lay within a tempting and convenient distance of Glendearg; and the Miller was so obliging, and his charge so moderate, that it required Hob Miller's utmost vigilance to prevent evasions of his right of monopoly.

The most effectual means he could devise was this show of good fellowship and neighbourly friendship, — under colour of which he made his annual cruise through the barony — numbered every corn-stack, and computed its contents by the boll, so that he could give a shrewd hint afterwards whether or not the grist came to the right mill.

Dame Elspeth, like her counpleers, was obliged to take these domiciliary visits in the sense of politeness; but in her case they had not occurred since her husband's death, probably because the Tower of Glendearg was distant, and there was but a trifling quantity of arable or *infield* land attached to it. This year there had been, upon some speculation of old Martin's, several bolls sown in the out-field, which, the season being fine, had ripened remarkably well. Perhaps this circumstance occasioned the honest Miller's including Glendearg, on this occasion, in his annual round.

Dame Glendinning received with pleasure a visit which she used formerly only to endure with patience; and she had changed her view of the matter chiefly, if not entirely, because Hob had brought with him his daughter Mysie, of whose features she could give so slight an account, but whose dress she had described so accurately to the Sub-Prior.

Hitherto this girl had been an object of very trifling consideration in the eyes of the good widow; but the Sub-Prior's particular and somewhat mysterious inquiries had set her brains to work on the subject of Mysie of the Mill; and she had here asked a broad question, and there she had thrown out an innuendo, and there again she had gradually led on to a conversation on the subject of poor Mysie. And from all inquiries and investigations she had collected, that Mysie was a dark-eyed laughter-loving wench, with cherry-cheeks, and a skin as white as her father's finest boldest flour, out of which was made the Abbot's own wastel-bread. For her temper, she sang and laughed from morning to night; and for her fortune, a material article, besides that which the Miller might have amassed by means of his proverbial golden thumb, Mysie was to inherit a good handsome lump of land, with a prospect of the mill and mill-acres descending to her husband on an easy lease, if a fair word were spoken in season to the Abbot, and to the Prior, and to the Sub-Prior, and to the Sacristan, and so forth.

By turning and again turning these advantages over in her own mind, Elspeth at length came to be of opinion, that the only way to save her son Halbert from a life of "spur, spear, and snaffle," as they called that of the border-riders, from the dint of a cloth-yard shaft, or the loop of an inch-cord, was, that he should marry and settle, and that Mysie Happer should be his destined bride.

As if to her wish, Hob Miller arrived on his strong-built mare, bearing on a pillion behind him the lovely Mysie, with cheeks like a peony-rose, (if Dame Glendinning had ever seen one,) spirits all afloat with rustic coquetry, and a profusion of hair as black as ebony. The *beau-ideal* which Dame Glendinning had been bodying forth in her imagination, became unexpectedly realized in the buxom form of Mysie Happer, whom, in the course of half an hour, she settled upon as the maiden who was to fix the restless and untutored Halbert. True, Mysie, as the dame soon saw, was like to love dancing round a may-pole as well as managing a domestic establishment, and Halbert, as like to break more heads than he would grin stacks of corn. But then a miller should always be of manly make, and has been described so since the days of Chaucer and James I.¹ Indeed to be able to outdo and bully the whole *Sucken*, (once more we use this barbarous phrase,) in all athletic exercises, was one way to render easy the collection of *multures* which men would have disputed with a less formidable champion. Then, as to the deficiencies of the miller's wife, the dame was of opinion that they might be supplied by the rectivity of the miller's mother. "I will keep house for the young folk myself, for the tower is grown very lonely," thought Dame Glendinning, "and to live near the kirk will be mair comfortable in my auld age — and then Edward may agree with his brother about the feu, more especially as he is a favourite with the Sub-Prior, and then he may live in the auld tower like his worthy father before him — and 'wha kens' but Mary Avenel, high-blood as she is, may even draw in her stool to the chimney-nook, and sit down here for good and a'!" — It's true she has no tocher, but the like of her for beauty and sonso no'er crossed my een; and I have kend every vench in the Hallidome of St Mary's — ay, and their mothers that bore them — ay, she is a sweet and a lovely creature as ever tied smood over brown hair — ay, and then, though her uncle keeps her out of her ain for the present time, yet it is to be thought the gray-hair'd shaft will find a hole in his coat of proof, as God help us! it has done in many a better man's — And, moreover, if they should stand on their pedigree and gentle race, Edward might say to them, that is, to her gentle kith and kin, 'whilk o' ye was her best friend when she came down the glen to Glendearg in a misty evening, on a beast mair like a cuddie than aught else?' — And if they tax him with churlish-

¹ The verse we have chosen for a motto, is from a poem imputed to James I. of Scotland. As for the Miller who figures among the Canterbury pilgrims; besides his sword and buckle, he boasted other attributes, all of which, but especially the last, shew that he relied more on the strength of the outside than that of the inside of his skull.

The miller was a stout carf for the nation,
Full big he was of brawn, and o'er of bones;
That proved well, for whensome he was gone;
At wedding he wold bear away the queen;
He was about shoulder'd, broad, a thick pair;
There was no spier that he wold leave a hair,
He drank it as a scunner with his heart, and cheer.

blood, Edward might say, that, forby the old proverbly, how

Gentle deed
Makes gentle bield;

yet, moreover, there comes no churi's blood from Glendinning or Brydone; for, says Edward—

The hoarse voice of the Miller at this moment recalled the game from her reverie, and compelled her to remember that if she meant to realize her airy castle, she must begin by laying this foundation in civility to her guest and his daughter, whom she was at that moment most strangely neglecting, though her whole plan turned on conciliating their favour and good opinion, and that, in fact, while arranging matters for so intimate a union with her company, she was suffering them to sit unnoticed, and in their riding gear, as if about to resume their journey. "And so I say, dame," concluded the Miller, (for she had not marked the beginning of his speech,) "an ye be so busied with your house-keep, or aught else, why, Mysie and I will trot our way down the glen again to Johnnie Broxmouth's, who pressed us right kindly to bide with him."

Starting at once from her dream of marriages and intermarriages, mills, mill-lands, and baronies, Dame Elspeth felt for a moment like the milkmaid in the fable, when she overset the pitcher, on the contents of which so many golden dreams were founded. But the foundation of Dame Glendinning's hopes was only tottering, not overthrown, and she hastened to restore its equilibrium. Instead of attempting to account for her absence of mind and want of attention to her guests, which she might have found something difficult, she assumed the offensive, like an able general when he finds it necessary, by a bold attack, to disguise his weakness.

A loud exclamation she made, and a passionate complaint she set up against the unkindness of her old friend, who could for an instant doubt the heartiness of her welcome to him and to his hopeful daughter; and then to think of his going back to John Broxmouth's, when the auld tower stood where it did, and had room in it for a friend or two in the worst of times—and he too a neighbour that his umquille gossip Simon, blessed be his cast, used to think the best friend he had in the Halidome! And on she went, urging her complaint with so much seriousness, that she had well-nigh imposed on herself as well as upon Hob Miller, who had no mind to take any thing in duddoon; and as it suited his plans to pass the night at Glendearg, would have been equally contented to do so even had his reception been less vehemently hospitable.

To all Elspeth's expostulations on the unkindness of his proposal to leave her dwelling, he answered composedly, "Nay, dame, what could I tell? ye might have had other grist to grind, for ye looked as if ye scarce saw us—or what know I? ye might bear in mind the words Martin told I had about the last barley ye sowed—for I ken dry miltures¹ will sometimes stick in the throat. A man seeks but his awn, and yet folk abill hold him for both miller and miller's man, that is miller and knave,² all the country over."

¹ Dry miltures were a fine, or compensation in money, for not grinding at the mill of the thirl. It was, and is, accounted a venial offence.

² The waul miller, is in the language of this age, called the knave, which, indeed, signifies originally his knave, (a knave—

"Alas, that you will say so, neighbour Hob," said Dame Elspeth, "for that Martin should have had any words with you about the mill-dues! I will chide him roundly for it, I promise you, on the faith of a true widow. You know full well that a lone woman is sore put upon by her servants."

"Nay, dame," said the Miller, unbuckling the broad belt which made fast his cloak, and served, at the same time, to suspend by his side a swinging Andrea Ferrara, "bear no grudge at Martin, for I bear none—I take it on me as a thing of mine office, to maintain my right of milture, lock, and goupin." And reason good, for as the old song says,

I live by my mill, God bless her,
She's parent, child, and wife.

The poor old slut, I am beholden to her for my living, and bound to stand by her, as I say to my mill-knave, in right and in wrong. And so should every honest fellow stand by his bread-winner.—And so, Mysie, ye may doff your cloak since our neighbour is so kindly glad to see us—why, I think, we are as blithe to see her—not one in the Halidome pays their miltures more duly, sequel, arriage, and carriage, and mill-services, used and wont."

With that the Miller hung his ample cloak without further ceremony upon a huge pair of stag's antlers, which adorned at once the naked walls of the tower, and served for what we vulgarly call cloak-pins.

In the meantime Dame Elspeth assisted to disembarass the dame whom she destined for her future daughter-in-law, of her hood, mantle, and the rest of her riding gear, giving her to appear as becommed the buxom daughter of the wealthy Miller, gay and goodly, in a white kirtle, the bussum of which were embroidered with green silk on lace or fringe, enfyned with some silver thread. An anxious glance did Elspeth cast upon the good-humoured face, which was now more fully shewn to her, and was only obscured by a quantity of raven black hair, which the maid of the mill had restrained by a swood of green silk, embroidered with silver, corresponding to the trimmings of her kirtle. The countenance itself was exceedingly comely—the eyes black, large, and roguishly good-humoured—the mouth was small—the lips well formed, though somewhat full—the teeth were pearly white—and the chin had a very seducing dimple in it. The form belonging to this joyous face was full and round, and firm and fair. It might become coarse and masculine some years hence, which is the common fault of Scottish beauty; but in Mysie's sixteenth year she had the shape of a Hebe. The anxious Elspeth, with all her maternal partiality, could not help admitting within herself, that a better man than Halbert might go further and fare worse. She looked a little giddy, and Halbert was not nineteen; still it was time ne

German, but by degrees came to be taken in a worse sense. In the old translations of the Bible, Paul is made to strike himself the knave of our Saviour. The allowance of meat taken by the miller's servant was called knave-ship.

³ The milture was the regular taxation for grinding the meal. The lock, signifying a small quantity, and the person, a hand-mill, were additional privileges demanded by the miller, and submitted to or refused by the farmer as circumstances permitted. These and other petty dues were called in general the *Scyrie*.

should be settled, for to that point the dame always returned; and here was an excellent opportunity.

The simple cunning of Dame Elspeth now exhausted itself in commendations of her fair guest, from the smood, as they say, to the single-soled shoe. Mysie listened and blushed with pleasure for the first five minutes; but ere ten had elapsed, she began to view the old lady's compliments rather as subjects of mirth than of vanity, and was much more disposed to laugh at than to be flattered with them, for Nature had mingled the good-humour with which she had endowed the dame with no small portion of shrewdness. Even Hob himself began to tire of hearing his daughter's praises, and broke in with, "Ay, ay, she is a clever qucan enough; and, were she five years older, she shall lay a loaded sack on an *aeer*¹ with e'er a lass in the Halidome. But I have been looking for your two sons, dame. Men say downby that Halbert's turned a wild springald, and that we may have word of him from Westmofeland one moonlight night or another."

"God forbid, my good neighbour; God, in his mercy, forbid!" said Dame Glendinning earnestly; for it was touching the very key-note of her apprehensions, to hint any probability that Halbert might become one of the marauders so common in the age and country. But, fearful of having betrayed too much alarm on this subject, she immediately added, "That though; since the last rout at Pinkiecleuch, she had been all of a tremble when a gun or a spear was named, or when men spoke of fighting; yet, thanks to God, and our Lady, her sons were like to live and die honest and peaceful tenants to the Abbey, as their father might have done, but for that awful hosting which he went forth to, with many a brave man that never returned."

"Ye need not tell me of it, dame," said the Miller, "since I was there myself, and made two pair of legs (and these were not mine, but my mare's,) worth one pair of hands. I judged how it would be, when I saw our host break ranks, with rushing on through that broken ploughed field, and so as they had made a pricker of me, I e'en pricked off with myself while the play was good."

"Ay, ay, neighbour," said the dame, "ye were aye a wise and a wary man; if my Simon had had your wit, he might have been here to speak about it this day; but he was aye cracking of his good blood and his high kindred, and lest would not serve him than to bide the bang to the last, with the earls, and knights, and squires, that had no wives to greet for them, or else had wives that cared not how soon they were widows; but that is not for the like of us. But touching my son Halbert, there is no fear of him; for if it should be his misfortune to be in the like case, he has the best pair of heels in the Halidome, and could run almost as fast as your mare herself."

"Is this he, neighbour?" quoth the Miller.

"No," replied the mother; "that is my youngest son, Edward, who can read and write like the Lord Abbot himself, if it were not a sin to say so."

"Ay," said the Miller; "and is that the young clerk the Sub-Prior thinks so much of? I they say he will come far ben that lad; wha kens but he may come to the Sub-Prior himself!—as broken a ship has been his land."

"To be a Prior, neighbour Miller," said Edward, "a man must first be a priest, and for that I judge I have little vocation."

"He will take to the plough-pettle, neighbour," said the good dame; "and so will Halbert too, I trust. I wish you saw Halbert.—Edward, where is your brother?"

"Hunting, I think," replied Edward; "at least he left us this morning to join the Laird of Colmalie and his hounds. I have heard them baying in the glen all day."

"And if I had heard that music," said the Miller, "it would have done my heart good, ay, and may be taken me two or three miles out of my road. When I was the Miller of Morebattle's knave, I have followed the hounds from Eckford to the foot of Hounam-law—followed them on foot, Dame Glendinning, ay, and led the chase when the Laird of Cessford and his gay riders were all thrown out by the mosses and gills. I brought the stag on my back to Hounam Cross, when the dogs had pulled him down. I think I see the old gray knight, as he sat so upright on his strong war-horse, all white with foam; and 'Miller,' said he to me, 'an thou wilt turn thy back on the mill, and wind with me, I will make a man of thee.' But I chose rather to abide by clap and happer, and the better luck was mine; for the proud Percy caused hang five of the Laird's hofschmen at Alrick for burning a rickle of houses some gate beyond Fowberry, and it might have been my luck as well as another man's."

"Ah, neighbour, neighbour," said Dame Glendinning, "you were aye wise and wary; but if you like hunting, I must say Halbert's the lad to please you. He hath all those fair holiday terms of hawk and hound as ready in his mouth as Tom with the tod's tail, that is the Lord Abbot's ranger."

"Ranges he not homeward at dinner-time, dame," demanded the Miller; "for we call noon the dinner-hour at Kennahuhair?"

The widow was forced to admit, that, even at this important period of the day, Halbert was frequently absent; at which the Miller shook his head, intimating, at the same time, some allusion to the proverb of MacFarlane's geese, which "liked their play better than their meat."

That the delay of dinner might not increase the Miller's disposition to prejudice Halbert, Dame Glendinning called hastily on Mary Avenel to take her task of entertaining Mysie Happer, while she herself rushed to the kitchen, and, entering at once into the province of Tibb Tacket, rummaged among trenehers and diabes, scratched pots from the fire, and placed pans and gridirons on it, accompanying her own feats of personal activity with such a continued list of injunctions to Tibb, that Tibb at length lost patience, and said, "Here was an unkele wark about meeting an auld miller, as if they had been to banquet the Hood of Bruce." But this, as it was supposed to be spoken aside, Dame Glendinning did not think it convenient to hear.

¹ See Note E. MacFarlane's Geese.

CHAPTER XIV.

May, let me have the friends who eat my victuals,
As various as my dishes. — The fawn's naught,
Where one huge plate predominates. John Phintox,
He shall be mighty beef, our English staple;
The worthy Alderman, a butter'd dumpling;
You pair of whaler'd Cornets, ruffs and roes;
Their friend the Dandy, a green goose in suppet.
And so the board is spread at once and fill'd
On the same principle — Variety.

New Play

"AND what brave lass is this?" said Hob Miller, as Mary Avenel entered the apartment to supply the absence of Dame Elapheth Glendinning.

"The young Lady of Avenel, father," said the Maid of the Mill, dropping as low a curtsy as her rustic manners enabled her to make. The Miller, her father, doffed his bonnet, and made his reverence, not altogether so low perhaps as if the young lady had appeared in the pride of rank and riches, yet so as to give high birth the due homage which the Scotch for a length of time scrupulously rendered to it.

Indeed, from having had her mother's example before her for so many years, and from a native sense of propriety and even of dignity, Mary Avenel had acquired a demeanour, which marked her title to consideration, and effectually checked any attempt at familiarity on the part of those who might be her associates, in her present situation, but could not be well termed her equals. She was by nature mild, pensive, and contemplative, gentle in disposition, and most placable when accidentally offended; but still she was of a retired and reserved habit, and shunned to mix in ordinary sports, even when the rare occurrence of a fair or wake gave her an opportunity of mingling with companions of her own age. If at such seasons she was seen for an instant, she appeared to behold them with the composed indifference of one to whom their gaiety was a matter of no interest, and who seemed only desirous to glide away from the scene as soon as she possibly could.

Something also had transpired concerning her being born on All-hallow Eve, and the powers with which that circumstance was supposed to invest her over the invisible world. And from all these particulars combined, the young men and women of the Halidome used to distinguish Mary among themselves by the name of the Spirit of Avenel, as if the fair but ~~fragile~~ beautiful but rather colourless cheek, the dark blue eye, and the shady hair, had belonged rather to the immaterial than the substantial world. The general tradition of the White Lady, who was supposed to wait on the fortunes of the family of Avenel, gave a sort of zest to this piece of rural wit. It gave great offence, however, to the two sons of Simon Glendinning; and when the expression was in their presence applied to ~~the young lady~~, Edward was wont to check the petulance of those who used it by strength of argument, and Halbert by strength of arm. In such cases Halbert had this advantage, that although he could render no aid to his brother's argument, yet when circumstances required it, he was sure to have that of Edward, who never indeed himself commenced a fray, but on the other hand, did not testify any reluctance to enter into combat in Halbert's behalf or in his rescue.

But the zealous attachment of the two youths,

being themselves, from the retired situation in which they dwelt, comparative strangers in the Halidome, did not serve in any degree to alter the feelings of the inhabitants towards the young lady, who seemed to have dropped amongst them from another sphere of life. Still, however, she was regarded with respect, if not with fondness; and the attention of the Sub-Prior to the family, not to mention the formidable name of Julian Avenel, which every new incident of those tumultuous times tended to render more famous, attached to his niece a certain importance. Thus some aspired to her acquaintance out of pride, while the more timid of the fens were anxious to inculcate upon their children, the necessity of being respectful to the noble orphan. So that Mary Avenel, little loved because little known, was regarded with a mysterious awe, partly derived from fear of her uncle's moss-troopers, and partly from her own retired and distant habits, enhanced by the superstitious opinions of the time and country.

It was not without some portion of this awe, that Myrie felt herself left alone in company with a young person so distant in rank, and so different in bearing, from herself; for her worthy father had taken the first opportunity to step out unobserved, in order to mark how the barn-yard was filled, and what prospect it afforded of grist to the mill. In youth, however, there is a sort of free-masonry, which, without much conversation, teaches young persons to estimate each other's character, and places them at ease on the shortest acquaintance. It is only when taught deceit by the commerce of the world, that we learn to shroud our character from observation, and to disguise our real sentiments from those with whom we are placed in communion.

Accordingly, the two young women were soon engaged in such objects of interest as best became their age. They visited Mary Avenel's pigeon, which she nursed with the tenderness of a mother; they turned over her slender stores of finery, which yet contained some articles that excited the respect of her companion, though Myrie was too good-humoured to nourish envy. A golden rosary, and some female ornaments marking superior rank, had been rescued in the moment of their utmost adversity, mere by Tibb Tacket's presence of mind, than by the care of their owner, who was at that sad period too much sunk in grief to pay any attention to such circumstances. They struck Myrie with a deep impression of veneration; for, excepting what the Lord Abbot and the convent might possess, she did not believe there was so much real gold in the world as was exhibited in these few trinkets, and Mary, however sage and serious, was not above being pleased with the admiration of her rustic companion.

Nothing, indeed, could exhibit a stronger contrast than the appearance of the two girls; — the good-humoured daughter-loving countenance of the Maid of the Mill, who stood gazing with unexpressed astonishment on whatever was in her inexperienced eye rare and costly, and with an humble, and at the same time cheerful acquiescence in her inferiority, asking all the little queries about the use and value of the ornaments, while Mary Avenel, with her quiet composed dignity and placidity of manner, produced them one after another for the amusement of her companion.

As they became gradually more familiar, Mysie of the Mill was just venturing to ask, why Mary Avenel never appeared at the May-pole, and to express her wonder when the young lady said she disliked dancing, when a tramping of horses at the gate of the tower interrupted their conversation.

Mysie flew to the shot window in the full ardour of unrestrained female curiosity. "Saint Mary! sweet lady! here come two well-mounted gallants; will you stop this way to look at them?"

"No," said Mary Avenel, "you shall tell me who they are."

"Well, if you like it better," said Mysie — "but how shall I know them? — Stay, I do know one of them, and so do you, lady; he is a blithe man, somewhat light of hand they say, but the gallants of those days think no great harm of that. He is your uncle's henchman, that they call Christie of the Clinthill; and he has not his old green jerkin and the rusty black-jack over it, but a scarlet cloak, laid down with silver lace three inches broad, and a breast-plate you might see to dress your hair in, as well as in that keeking-glass in the ivory frame that you shewed me even now. Come, dear lady, come to the shot-window and see him."

"If it be the man you mean, Mysie," replied the orphan of Avenel, "I shall see him soon enough, considering either the pleasure or comfort the sight will give me."

"Nay, but if you will not come to see gay Christie," replied the Maid of the Mill, her face flushed with eager curiosity, "come and tell me who the gallant is that is with him, the handsomest, the very loveliest young man I ever saw with sight."

"It is my foster-brother, Halbert Glendinning," said Mary, with apparent indifference; for she had been accustomed to call the sons of Elspeth her foster-brothers, and to live with them as if they had been brothers in earnest.

"Nay, by Our Lady, that it is not," said Mysie; "I know the favour of both the Glendinnings well, and I think this rider be not of our country. He has a crimson velvet bonnet, and long brown hair falling down under it, and a beard on his upper lip, and his chin clean and close shaved, save a small patch on the point of the chin, and a sky-blue jerkin, slashed and lined with white satin, and trunk-hose to suit, and no weapon but a rapier and dagger — Well, if I was a man, I would never wear weapon but the rapier! it is so slender and becoming, instead of having a cart-load of iron at my back, like my father's broad-sword with its great rusty basket-hilt. Do you not delight in the rapier and poniard, lady?"

"The best sword," answered Mary, "if I must needs answer a question of the sort, is that which is drawn in the best cause, and which is best used when it is out of the scabbard."

"But can you not guess who this stranger should be?" said Mysie.

"Indeed, I cannot even attempt it; but to judge by his companion, it is no matter how little he is known," replied Mary.

"My bonison on his bonny face," said Mysie, "if he is not going to alight here! Now, I am as much pleased as if my father had given me the silver settings he has promised me so often; — nay, you had as well come to the window, for you go and see him by and by whether you will or not."

"Do not know how much sooner, Mary Avenel

might have sought the point of observation, if she had not been scared from it by the unrestrained curiosity expressed by her buxom friend; but at length the same feeling prevailed over her sense of dignity, and satisfied with having displayed all the indifference that was necessary in point of decorum, she no longer thought herself bound to restrain her curiosity.

From the out-shot or projecting window she could perceive, that Christie of the Clinthill was attended on the present occasion by a very gay and gallant cavalier, who from the nobleness of his countenance and manner, his rich and handsome dress, and the showy appearance of his horse and furniture, must, she agreed with her new friend, be a person of some consequence.

Christie also seemed conscious of something, which made him call out with more than his usual insolence of manner, "What, ho! so ho! the house! Churr peasants, will no one answer when I call! — Ho! Martin, — Tibb, — Dame Glendinning! — a murrain on you, must we stand keeping our horses in the cold here, and they steaming with heat, when ye have ridden so sharply?"

"At length he was obeyed, and old Martin made his appearance. "Ha!" said Christie, "art thou there, old Truopenny! here, stable me these steeds, and see them well bedded, and stretch thine old limbs by rubbing them down; and see thou quit not the stable till there is not a turned hair on either of them."

Martin took the horses to the stable as commanded, but suppressed not his indignation a moment after he could vent it with safety. "Would not any one think," he said to Jasper, an old ploughman, who, in coming to his assistance, had heard Christie's imperious injunctions, "that this loon, this Christie of the Clinthill, was laird or lord at least of him? No such thing, man! I remember him a little dirty turnspit-boy in the house of Avenel, that every body in a frosty morning like this warmed his fingers by kicking or cuffing! and now he is a gentleman, and swears, d—n him and renounce him, as if the gentlemen could not so rich as keep their own wickedness to themselves, without the like of him going to hell in their very company, and by the same road. I have as much a mind as ever I had to my dinner, to go back and tell him to sort his horse himself, since he is as able as I am."

"Hout, hout, man!" answered Jasper, "keep a calm sough; better to fleech a fool than fight with him."

Martin acknowledged the truth of the proverb, and, much comforted therewith, betook himself to cleaning the stranger's horse with great assiduity, remarking, it was a pleasure to handle a handsome nag, and turned over the other to the charge of Jasper. Nor was it until Christie's commands were literally complied with, that he deemed it proper after fitting ablutions, to join the party in the spence; not for the purpose of waiting upon them, as a mere modern reader might possibly expect, but that he might have his share of dinner in their company.

In the meanwhile Christie had presented his companion to Dame Glendinning as Sir Phoebe Shaston, a friend of his and of his master, come to spend three or four days with little din in the tower. The good dame could not conceive how she

THE MONASTERY.

was entitled to shew an honour, and would fain have pleaded her want of every sort of convenience to entertain a guest of that quality. But, indeed, the visitor, when he cast his eyes round the bare walls, eyed the huge black chimney, scrutinized the meagre and broken furniture of the apartment, and beheld the embarrassment of the mistress of the family, instigated great reluctance to intrude upon Dame Glendinning a visit, which could scarce, from all appearances, prove otherwise than an inconvenience to her, and a penance to himself.

But the reluctant hostess and her guest had to do with an inexorable man, who silenced all expostulation with, "such was his master's pleasure. And, moreover," he continued, "though the Baron of Avenel's will must, and ought to prove law to all within ten miles around him, yet here, dame," he said, "is a letter from your petticoated baron, the lord-priest yonder, who enjoins you, as you regard his pleasure, that you afford to this good knight such decent accommodation as is in your power, suffering him to live as privately as he shall desire. — And for you, Sir Pierce Shafton," continued Christie, "you will judge for yourself, whether secrecy and safety is not more your object even now, than soft beds and high cheer. And do not judge of the dame's goods by the semblance of her cottage; for you will see by the dinner she is about to spread for us, that the vessel of the kirk is seldom found with her basket bare." To Mary Avenel Christie presented the stranger, after the best fashion he could, as to the niece of his master the baron.

While he thus laboured to reconcile Sir Pierce Shafton to his fate, the widow, having consulted her son Edward on the real import of the Lord Abbot's injunction, and having found that Christie had given a true exposition, saw nothing else left for her but to make that fate as easy as she could to the stranger. He himself also seemed reconciled to his lot by some feeling probably of strong necessity; and accepted with a good grace the hospitality which the dame offered with a very indifferent one.

In fact, the dinner, which soon smoked before the assembled guests, was of that substantial kind which warrants plenty and comfort. Dame Glendinning had cooked it after her best manner; and, delighted with the handsome appearance which her good cheer made when placed on the table, forgot both her plans and the vexations which interrupted them, in the business of expressing her assembled visitors to eat and drink, watching every trencher as it waxed empty, and longing it with fresh supplies ere the guest could utter a negative.

In the meanwhile, the company attentively regarded each other's motions, and seemed endeavouring to form a judgment of each other's character. Sir Pierce Shafton condescended to speak to no one but to Mary Avenel, and on her he conferred exactly the same familiar and compassionate, though somewhat scornful sort of attention, which a pretty fellow of these days will sometimes condescend to bestow on a country maid, when there is no prettier or more fashionable woman present. The manner indeed was different, for the courtesy of those times did not permit Sir Pierce Shafton to pick his teeth, or to yawn, or to gabble like the begone whose tongue (as he says) was cut out by the king, or to neglect cleanliness or blindness,

or any other infirmity of the organs. But in the embroidery of his conversation was different. The groundwork was the same, and the high-flown and ornate compliments with which the gallant knight of the sixteenth century interarded his conversation, were as much the offspring of egotism and self-conceit, as the jargon of the coxcombs of our own days.

The English knight was, however, somewhat daunted at finding that Mary Avenel listened with an air of indifference, and answered with wonderful brevity, to all the fine things which caught, as he conceived, to have dazzled her with their brilliancy, and puzzled her by their obscurity. But if he was disappointed in making the desired, or rather the expected impression, upon her when he addressed, Sir Pierce Shafton's discourse was marvellous in the ears of Mysie the Miller's daughter, and not the less so that she did not comprehend the meaning of a single word which he uttered. Indeed, the gallant knight's language was far too courtly to be understood by persons of much greater acuteness than Mysie's.

It was about this period, that the "only rare poet of his time, the witty, comical, facetiously-quick, and quickly-facetious, John Lyly—he that sat at Apollo's table, and to whom Phoebus gave a wreath of his own hairs without mistaking"—he, in short, who wrote that singularly conceited work, called *Euphues and his England*, was in the very zenith of his absurdity and reputation. The quaint, forced, and unnatural style which he introduced by his "*Anatomy of Wit*," had a fashion as rapid as it was momentary—all the court ladies were his scholars, and to *parler Euphuisme*, was as necessary a qualification to a courtly gallant, as those of understanding how to use his rapier, or to dance a minuet.

It was no wonder that the Maid of the Mill was soon as effectually blinded by the intricacies of this erudite and courtly style of conversation; as she had ever been by the dust of her father's own meal-sacks. But there she sat with her mouth and eyes as open as the mill-door and the two windows, chewing teeth as white as her father's bolted flour, and endeavouring to secure a word or two for her own future use out of the pearls of rhetoric which Sir Pierce Shafton scattered around him with such bounteous profusion.

For the male part of the company, Edward felt ashamed of his own manner and slowness of speech, when he observed the handsome young courtier, with an ease and volubility of which he had no conception, run over all the commonplace topics of high-flown gallantry. It is true, the good sense and natural taste of young Glendinning soon informed him that the gallant cavalier was speaking nonsense. But, alas! where is the man of modest merit, and real talent, who has not suffered from being outshone in conversation, and outstripped in the race of life, by men of less reserve, and of qualities more showy, though less substantial; and well constituted must the mind be, that can yield up the prize without envy to competitors more worthy than himself.

¹ Such, and yet more extravagant, are the compliments paid to this author by his other names. Notwithstanding all imagination, Lyly was really a man of wit and imagination, though both were obscured by his most monstrous affectation that ever depicted a painted page.

Edward Glendinning had no such philosophy. While he despised the jargon of the gay cavalier, he envied the facility with which he could run on, as well as the courtly tone and expression, and the perfect ease and elegance with which he offered all the little acts of politeness to which the duties of the table gave opportunity. And if I am to speak truth, I must own that he envied those qualities the more as they were all exercised in Mary Avenel's service, and, although only so far accepted as they could not be refused, intimated a wish on the stranger's part to place himself in her good graces, as the only person in the room to whom he thought it worth while to recommend himself. His title, rank, and very handsome figure, together with some sparks of wit and spirit which flashed across the cloud of nonsense which he uttered, fondled him, as the words of the old song say, "a lad for a lady's vying;" so that poor Edward, with all his real worth and acquired knowledge, in his home-spun doublet, blue cap, and deerskin trowsers, looked like a clown beside the courtier, and, feeling the full inferiority, nourished no good-will to him by whom he was eclipsed.

Christie, on the other hand, so soon as he had satisfied to the full a voracious appetite, by means of which persons of his profession could, like the wolf and eagle, gorge themselves with as much food at one meal as might serve them for several days, began also to feel himself more in the background than he liked to be. This worthy had, amongst his other good qualities, an excellent opinion of himself; and, being of a bold and forward disposition, had no mind to be thrown into the shade by any one. With an impudent familiarity which such persons mistake for graceful case, he broke in upon the knight's finest speeches with as little remorse as he would have driven the point of his lance through a laced doublet.

Sir Pierce Shafton, a man of rank and high birth, by no means encouraged or endured this familiarity, and requested the intruder either with total neglect, or such laconic replies, as intimated a sovereign contempt for the rude spearman, who affected to converse with him upon terms of equality.

The Miller held his peace; for, as his usual conversation turned chiefly on his clapper and toll-dial, he had no mind to brag of his wealth in presence of Christie of the Clinthill, or to intrude his discourse on the English cavalier.

A little specimen of the conversation may not be out of place, were it but to shew young ladies what fine things they have lost by living when Euphuism is out of fashion.

"Credit me, fairest lady," said the knight, "that such is the tanning of our English courtiers of the chaffard strain, that, as they have infinitely refined upon the plain and rustical discourse of our fathers, which, as I may say, more becometh the mouths of country roisterers in a May-game than that of courtly gallants in a galliard, so I hold it ineffably and unutterably impossible, that those who may succeed us in that garden of wit and courtesy shall alter or amend it. Venus delighted but in the language of Mercury, Euphrosyne will stoop to no one but Alexander, none can sound Apollo's pipe but Orpheus."

"Without sir," said Mary, who could scarcely help laughing, "we have but to rejoice in the changes which hath honoured this solitude with a

glimpse of the sun of courtesy, though it rather blinds than enlightens us."

"Pretty and quaint, fairest lady," answered the Euphuist. "Ah, that I had with me my Anatomy of Wit—that all-to-be-unparalleled volume—that quintessence of human wit—that treasury of quaint invention—that exquisitely-pleasant-to-read, and inevitably-necessary-to-be-remembered manual, of all that is worthy to be known—which indoctrines the rude in civility, the dull in intellectuality, the heavy in jocosity, the blunt in gentility, the vulgar in nobility, and all of them in that unutterable perfection of human utterance, that eloquence which no other eloquence is sufficient to praise, that art which, when we call it by its own name of Euphuism, we bestow on it its richest panegyric."

"By Saint Mary," said Christie of the Clinthill, "if your worship had told me that you had left such stores of wealth as you talk of at Prudhoe Castle, Long Dickie and I would have had them off with us if man and horse could have carried them; but you told us of no treasure I wot of, save the silver tongue for turning up your mustachoes."

The knight treated this intruder's mistake—for certainly Christie had no idea that all these epithets which sounded so rich and splendid, were lavished upon a small quarto volume—with a stare, and then turning again to Mary Avenel, the only person whom he thought worthy to address, he proceeded in his strain of high-flown oratory, "Even thus," said he, "do hogs condemn the splendour of Oriental pearls; even thus are the delicacies of a choice repast in vain offered to the long-eared graser of the common, who turneth from them to devour a thistle. Surely as idle is it to pour forth the treasures of oratory before the eyes of the ignorant, and to spread the dainties of the intellectual banquet before those who are, morally and metaphysically speaking, no better than asses."

"Sir Knight, since that is your quality," said Edward, "we cannot strive with you in loftiness of language; but I pray you in fair courtesy, while you honour my father's house with your presence, to spare us such vile comparisons."

"Peace, good villagio," said the knight, gracefully waving his hand, "I pritheee peace, kind rustic; and you, my guide, whom I may scarce call honest, let me prevail upon you to imitate the laudable taciturnity of that honest yeoman, who sits as mute as a mill-post, and of that comely damsel, who seems as with her ears she drank in what she did not altogether comprehend, even as a palfrey listening to a lute, whereof, however, he knoweth not the gamut."

"Marvelous fine words," at length said dame Glendinning, who began to be tired of sitting so long silent, "marvellous fine words, neighbour Happer, are they not?"

"Brave words—very brave words—very exceeding pyot words," answered the Miller; "nevertheless, to speak my mind, a Epy of brass were worth a bushel o' them."

"I think so too, under his worship's leave," answered Christie of the Clinthill. "I well remember that at the race of Morham, as we call it, near Berwick, I took a young Scottish fellow out of saddle with my lance, and sent him, I thought, a good length from his nag; and so, as he had some gold on his laced doublet, I deemed he might

he' the like on it in his pocket too, though that is a rule that does not aye hold good—So I was speaking to him of ransom, and out he comes with a handful of such tokens as his honour there hath gleaned up, and staved me for mercy, as I was a true son of Mars, and such like."

"And obtained no mercy at thy hand, I dare be sworn," said the knight, who deigned not to speak Englishman excepting to the fair sex.

"By my troggas," replied Christie, "I would have thrust my lance down his throat, but just then they flung open that accursed postern gate, and forth pricked old Hunson, and Henry Carey, and as many fellows as their heels as turned the chase northward again. So I e'en pricked Bayard with the spur, and went off with the rest; for a man should ride when he may not wrestle, as they say in Tynedale."

"Trust me," said the knight, again turning to Mary Avenel, "if I do not pity you, lady, who, being of noble blood, are thus in a manner compelled to abide in the cottage of the ignorant, like the precious stone in the head of the toad, or like a precious garland on the brow of an ass.—But soft, what gallant haunts are here, whose garb savoureth more of the rustic than doth his demeanour, and whose looks seem more lofty than his habit! even as——"

"I pray you, Sir Knight," said Mary, "to spare your courtly similitudes for refined ears, and give me leave to name unto you my foster-brother, Halbert Glendinning."

"The son of the good dame of the cottage?" said the English knight; "for by some such name did my guide discriminate the mistress of this mansion, which you, madam, enrich with your presence.—And yet, touching this juvenile, he hath that about him which belongeth to higher birth, for all are not black who dig coals."

"Nor all white who are millers," said honest Happer, glad to get in a word, as they say, edge-ways.

Halbert, who had sustained the glance of the Englishman with some impatience, and knew not what to make of his manner and language, replied with some asperity, "Sir Knight, we have in this land of Scotland an ancient saying, 'Scorn not the buck that hides you'—you are a guest of my father's house to shelter you from danger, if I am rightly informed by the domestics. Be not its humbleness, nor that of its inmates—ye might long have chidden at the court of England, ere we had sought your favour, or lumbered you with our society. Since your fate has sent you hither amongst us, be contented with such fare and such converse as we can afford you, and scorp us not for our kindness; for the Scots wear short patience and long daggers."

All eyes were turned on Halbert while he was thus speaking, and there was a general feeling that his countenance had an expression of intelligence, and his person an air of dignity, which they had never before observed. Whether it was that the wonderful being with whom he had so lately held communication, had bestowed on him a grace and dignity of look and bearing which he had not before, or whether the being conversant in high matters, and called on a daily toward that of other men, had a natural effect in giving becoming confidence

to his language and manner, we pretend not to determine. But it was evident to all, that, from this day, young Halbert was an altered man; that he acted with the steadiness, promptitude, and determination, which belonged to riper years, and bore himself with a manner which appertained to higher rank.

The knight took the rebuke with good humour. "By mine honour," he said, "thou hast reason on thy side, good juvenile—nevertheless, I spoke not as in ridicule of the roof which shelters me, but rather in your own praise, to whom, if this roof be native, thou mayst nevertheless rise from its lowliness; even as the lark, which maketh its humble nest in the furrow, ascendeth towards the sun, as well as the eagle which buildeth her eyrie in the cliff."

This high-flown discourse was interrupted by Dame Glendinning, who, with all the busy anxiety of a mother, was loading her son's trencher with food, and dining in his ear her reproaches on account of his prolonged absence. "And see," she said, "that you do not one day get such a sight while you are walking about among the haunts of them that are not of our flesh and bone, as that Mungo Murray when he slept on the greenward ring of the Auld Kirkhill at sunset, and awakened at daybreak in the wild hills of Breadalbane. And see that, when you are looking for deer, the red stag does not gail you as he did Diccon Thorburn, who never overcast the wound that he took from a buck's horn. And see, when you go swaggering about with a long broadsword by your side, which it becomes no peaceful man to do, that you chance meet with them that have broadsword and lance both—there are enow of rank riders in this land, that neither fear God nor regard man."

Here her eye, "in a fine frenzy rolling," fell full upon that of Christie of the Clinthill, and at once her fears for having given offence interpreted the current of maternal rebuke, which, like rebuke matrimonial, may be often better meant than stated. There was something of sly and watchful significance in Christie's eye, an eye gray, keen, fierce, yet wily, formed to express at once cunning and malice, which made the dame instantly conjecture she had said too much, while she saw in imagination her twelve goodly cows go bowing down the glen in a moonlight night, with half a score of Border spearmen at their heels.

Her voice, therefore, sunk from the elevated tone of maternal authority into a whimpering apologetic sort of strain, and she proceeded to say, "It is as that I have only ill thoughts of the Border riders, for Tibb Tacket there has often heard me say that I thought spear and bridle as natural to a Borderman as a pen to a priest, or a feather-bed to a lady; and—have you not heard us say it, Tibb?"

Tibb showed something less than her expected alacrity in attesting her mistress's deep respect for the freebooters of the southland hills; but, thus conjured, did at length reply, "Ment ay, mistress, I be warrant I have heard you say something like that."

"Mother!" said Halbert, in a firm and commanding tone of voice, "what or whom is it that you fear under my father's roof?—I well hope that it harbours not a guest in whose presence you are afraid to say your pleasure to me or my brother! I am sorry I have been detained so late, being

ignorant of the fair company which I should encounter on my return.—I pray you let this excuse suffice: and what satisfies you will, I trust, be nothing less than acceptable to your guests.”

An answer calculated so justly betwixt the submission due to his parent, and the natural feeling of dignity in one who was by birth master of the mansion, excited universal satisfaction. And as Elspeth herself confessed to Tibb on the same evening, “She did not think it had been in the callant. Till that night, he took pets and passions if he was spoke to, and lap through the house like a four-year-auld at the least word of advice that was muint at him, but now he spoke as grave and as douce as the Lord Abbot himself. She kendua,” she said, “what might be the upshot of it, but it was like he was a wonderfu’ callant even now.”

The party then separated, the young men setting for their apartment, the elder to their household cares. While Christie went to see his horse properly accommodated, Edward betock himself to his book, and Halbert, who was as ingenious in employing his hands as he had hitherto appeared imperfect in mental exertion, applied himself to constructing a place of concealment in the floor of his apartment by raising a plank, beneath which he resolved to deposit that copy of the Holy Scriptures which had been so strangely regained from the possession of men and spirits.

In the meanwhile, Sir Pierce Shafton sat still as a stone, in the chair in which he had deposited himself, his hands folded on his breast, his legs stretched straight out before him, and resting upon the heels, his eyes cast up to the ceiling as if he had meant to count every mesh of every cobweb with which the arched roof was canopied, wearing at the same time a face of as solemn and imperturbable gravity, as if his existence had depended on the accuracy of his calculation.

He could scarce be roused from his listless state of contemplative absorption so as to take some supper, a meal at which the younger females appeared not. Sir Pierce stared around twice or thrice as if he missed something; but he asked not for them, and only evinced his sense of a proper audience being wanting, by his abstraction and absence of mind, seldom speaking until he was twice addressed, and then replying, without trope or figure, in that plain English, which nobody could speak better when he had a mind.

Christie, finding himself in undisturbed possession of the conversation, indulged all who chose to listen with details of his own wild and inglorious warfare, while Dame Elspeth’s eurch bristled with horror, and Tibb Tasket, rejoiced to find herself once more in the company of a jack-man, listened to his tales, like Desdemona to Othello’s, with undisguised delight. Meantime the two young Glendinning were each wrapped up in his own reflections, and only interrupted in them by the signal to move bedward.

CHAPTER XV.

*He strikes no coin, 'tis true, but coins new phrases,
And sends them forth as knaves read gilded counters,
Which wise men scorn, and fools accept in payment.
Old Play.*

In the morning Christie of the Clinthill was no where to be seen. As this worthy personage did seldom pique himself on sounding a trumpet before his movements, no one was surprised at his moonlight departure, though some alarm was excited lest he had not made it empty-handed. So, in the language of the rational bailed,

*Some ran to cupboard, and some to kist,
But nought was away that could be mist.*

All was in order, the key of the stable left above the door, and that of the iron grate in the inside of the lock. In short, the retreat had been made with scrupulous attention to the security of the garrison, and so far Christie left them nothing to complain of.

The safety of the premisses was ascertained by Halbert, who, instead of stretching up a gun or crossbow, and sallying out for the day as had been his frequent custom, now, with a gravity beyond his years, took a survey of all around the tower, and then returned to the spence, or public apartment, in which, at the early hour of seven, the morning-meal was prepared.

There he found the Euphuist in the same elegant posture of abstruse calculation which he had exhibited on the preceding evening, his arms folded in the same angle, his eyes turned up to the same cobwebs, and his heels resting on the ground as before. Tired of this affectation of indolent importance, and not much flattered with his guest’s persevering in it to the last, Halbert resolved at once to break the ice, being determined to know what circumstance had brought to the Tower of Glendinning a guest at once so supercilious and so silent.

“Sir Knight,” he said with some firmness, “I have twice given you good morning, to which the absence of your mind hath, I presume, prevented you from yielding attention, or from making return. This exchange of courtesy is at your pleasure to give or withhold—But, as what I have farther to say concerns your comfort and your emotions in an especial manner, I will entreat you to give me some signs of attention, that I may be sure I am not wasting my words on a monumental image.”

At this unexpected address, Sir Pierce Shafton opened his eyes, and afforded the speaker a broad stare; but as Halbert returned the glance without either confusion or dismay, the knight thought proper to change his posture, draw in his legs, raise his eyes, fix them on young Glendinning, and assume the appearance of one who listens to what is said to him. Nay, to make his purpose more evident, he gave voice to his resolution in those words, “Speak! we do hear.”

“Sir Knight,” said the youth, “it is the custom of this household, or particularly of St. Mary’s, to trouble with inquiries no guests who receive our hospitality, providing they carry in our houses only for a single revolution of the sun. We know that both criminals and debtors come hither for sanctuary, and we seek to make them the pillars

whom chance may make our guest, an avowal of the cause of his pilgrimage and penance. But when one so high above our rank as yourself, Sir Knight, and especially one to whom the possession of such pre-eminence is not indifferent, shews his determination to be our guest for a longer time, it is our usage to inquire of him whence he comes, and what is the cause of his journey?"

The English knight gaped twice or thrice before he answered, and then replied in a bantering tone, "Truly, good villaggio, your question hath in it somewhat of embarrassment, for you ask me of things concerning which I am not as yet altogether determined what answer I may find it convenient to make. Let it suffice thee, kind juvenal, that thou hast the Lord Abbot's authority for treating me to the best of that power of thine, which, indeed, may not always so well suffice for my accommodation as either of us would desire."

"I must have a more precise answer than this, Sir Knight," said the young Glendinning.

"Friend," said the knight, "be not outrageous. It may suit your northern imaginers thus to press harshly upon the secrets of thy betters; but believe me, that even as the ~~lute~~ struck by an unskilful hand, doth produce discords, so —" At this moment the door of the apartment opened, and Mary Avenel presented herself — "But who can talk of discords," said the knight, assuming his complimentary vein and humour, "when the soul of harmony descends upon us in the presence of surpassing beauty! For even as foxes, wolves, and other animals void of sense and reason, do fly from the presence of the resplendent sun of heaven when he arises in his glory, so do strife, wrath, and all ireful passions retreat, and, as it were, scud away, from the face which now beams upon us, with power to compose our angry passions, illuminate our errors and difficulties, soothe our wounded minds, and lull to rest our disorderly apprehensions; for as the heat and warmth of the eye of day is to the material and physical world, so is the eye which I now bow down before to that of the intellectual microcosm."

He concluded with a profound bow; and Mary Avenel, gazing from one to the other, and plainly seeing that something was amiss, could only say, "For heaven's sake, what is the meaning of this?"

The newly-acquired tact and intelligence of her foster-brother was as yet insufficient to enable him to give an answer. He was quite uncertain how he ought to deal with a guest, who, preserving a singularly high tone of assumed superiority and importance, seemed nevertheless so little serious in what he said, that it was quite impossible to discern with accuracy whether he was in jest or earnest.

Fearing, however, the internal resolution to being Sir Pierce Shafton to a reckoning at a more fit place and season, he resolved to prosecute the matter no farther at present; and the entrance of his mother with the damsel of the Mill, and the return of the honest Miller from the stack-yard, where he had been numbering and calculating the probable amount of the season's grist, rendered further discussion impossible for the moment.

In the course of the calculation it could not but strike the men of men and grindstones, that, after the dinner's dues were paid, and after all which he himself could, by any means deduct from the crop, still the residue which must revert to Dame Glen-

dinning could not be less than considerable. I wet not if this led the honest Miller to nourish any plans similar to those adopted by Elspeth; but it is certain that he accepted with grateful alacrity an invitation which the dame gave to his daughter, to remain a week or two as her guest at Glendearg.

The principal persons being thus in high good humour with each other, all business gave place to the hilarity of the morning repast; and so much did Sir Pierce appear gratified by the attention which was paid to every word that he uttered by the nut-brown Mysie, that, notwithstanding his high birth and distinguished quality, he bestowed on her some of the more ordinary and second-rate tropes of his elocution.

Mary Avenel, when relieved from the awkwardness of feeling the full weight of his conversation addressed to herself, enjoyed it much more; and the good knight, encouraged by those conciliating marks of approbation from the sex, for whose sake he cultivated his oratorical talents, made speedy intimation of his purpose to be more communicative than he had shewn himself in his conversation with Halbert Glendinning, and gave them to understand, that it was in consequence of some pressing danger that he was at present their involuntary guest.

The conclusion of the breakfast was a signal for the separation of the company. The Miller went to prepare for his departure; his daughter to arrange matters for her unexpected stay; Edward was summoned to consultation by Martin concerning some agricultural matter, in which Halbert could not be brought to interest himself; the dame left the room upon her household concerns, and Mary was in the act of following her, when she suddenly recollected, that if she did so, the strange knight and Halbert must be left alone together, at the risk of another quarrel.

The maiden no sooner observed this circumstance, than she instantly returned from the door of the apartment, and, seating herself in a small stone window-seat, resolved to maintain that curb which she was sensible her presence imposed on Halbert Glendinning, of whose quick temper she had some apprehensions.

The stranger marked her motions, and, either interpreting them as inviting his society, or obedient to those laws of gallantry which permitted him not to leave a lady in silence and solitude, he instantly placed himself near to her side and opened the conversation as follows: —

"Credit me, fair lady," he said, addressing Mary Avenel, "it much rejoiceth me, being, as I am, a banished man from the delights of mine own country, that I shall find here, in this obscure and silvan cottage of the north, a fair form and a candid soul, with whom I may explain my mutual sentiments. And let me pray you in particular, lovely lady, that, according to the universal custom now predominant in our court, the garden of superior wits, you will exchange with me some epithet whereby you may mark my devotion to your service. Be henceforward named, for example, my Protection, and let me be your Affability."

"Our northern and country manners, Sir Knight, do not permit us to exchange epithets with those to whom we are strangers," replied Mary Avenel.

"Nay, but see now," said the knight, "how you are started! even as the unbroken steed, which

swerves aside from the shaking of a handkerchief, though he must in time encounter the waving of a peacock. This courtly exchange of epithets of honour, is no more than the compliments which pass between valour and beauty, wherever they meet, and under whatever circumstances. Elizabeth of England herself calls Philip Sydney her Courage, and he in return calls that princess his Inspiration. Wherefore, my fair Protection, for by such epithet it shall be mine to denominate you—"

"Not without the young lady's consent, sir!" interrupted Halbert; "most truly do I hope your courtly and quaint breeding will not so far prevail over the more ordinary rules of civil behaviour."

"Fair tenant of an indifferent copyhold," replied the knight, with the same coolness and civility of men, but in a tone somewhat more lofty than he used to the young lady, "we do not in the southern parts, much intermingle discourse, save with those with whom we may stand on some footing of equality; and I must, in all discretion, remind you, that the necessity which makes us inhabitants of the same cabin, doth not place us otherwise on a level with each other."

"By Saint Mary," replied young Gleninning, "it is my thought that it does; for plain men hold, that he who asks the shelter is indebted to him who gives it; and so far, therefore, is our rank equalized while this roof covers us both."

"Thou art altogether deceived," answered Sir Pierce; "and that thou mayst fully adapt thyself to our relative condition, know that I account not myself thy guest, but that of thy master, the Lord Abbot of St Mary's, who, for reasons best known to himself and me, chooseth to administer his hospitality to me through the means of thee, his servant and vassal, who art, therefore, in good truth, as passive an instrument of my accommodation as this ill-made and rugged joint-stool on which I sit, or as the wooden trencher from which I eat my coarse commons. Wherefore," he added, turning to Mary, "fairest mistress, or rather, as I said before, most lovely Protection!"

Mary Avenel was about to reply to him, when the stern, fierce, and resentful expression of voice and countenance with which Halbert exclaimed, "Not from the King of Scotland, did he live, would I brook such terms!" induced her to throw herself between him and the stranger, exclaiming, "For God's sake, Halbert, beware what you do!"

"Fear not, fairest Protection," replied Sir Pierce, with the utmost serenity, "that I can be provoked by this rustical and mistaught juvenile to do aught misbecoming your presence or mine own dignity; for as soon shall the gunner's linstock give fire unto the icicle, as the spark of passion inflame my blood, tempered as it is to serenity by the respect due to the presence of my gracious Protection."

"You may well call her your protection, Sir Knight," said Halbert; "by Saint Andrew, it is the only sensible word I have heard you speak! But we may meet where her protection shall no longer afford you shelter."

"Fairest Protection," continued the courtier, not again humming with a look, far less with a direct gaze, the threat of the incensed Halbert, "doubt not that my faithful Affability will be more com-

moved by the speech of this rudesby, than the bright and serene moon is perturbed by the baying of the cottage-cur, proud of the height of his own dung-hill, which, in his conceit, thrust him nearer unto the majestic luminary."

To what lengths so unavowable a shaft might have driven Halbert's indignation, is left uncertain; for at that moment Edward rushed into the apartment with the intelligence that two most important officers of the Convent, the Kitchenier and Refectoryer, were just arrived with a sumpter-mule, loaded with provisions, announcing that the Lord Abbot, the Sub-Prior, and the Sacristan, were on their way thither. A circumstance so very extraordinary had never been recorded in the annals of Saint Mary's, or in the traditions of Glendearg, though there was a faint legendary report that a certain Abbot had dined there in old days, after having been bewildered in a hunting expedition amongst the wilds which lie to the northward. But that the present Lord Abbot should have taken a voluntary journey to so wild and dreary a spot, the very Kamtschatka of the Halidoms, was a thing never dreamt of; and the news excited the greatest surprise in all the members of the family saving Halbert alone.

This fiery youth was too full of the insult he had received to think of any thing as unconnected with it. "I am glad of it," he exclaimed; "I am glad the Abbot comes hither. I will know of him by what right this stranger is sent hither to domineer over us under our father's roof, as if we were slaves and not freemen. I will tell the proud priest to his beard!"

"Alas! alas! my brother," said Edward, "think what these words may cost thee!"

"And what will, or what can they cost me," said Halbert, "that I should sacrifice my human feelings and my justifiable resentment to the fear of what the Abbot can do?"

"Our mother—our mother!" exclaimed Edward; "think, if she is deprived of her home, expelled from her property, how can you amend what your rashness may ruin!"

"It is too true, by Heaven!" said Halbert striking his forehead. Then, stamping his foot against the floor to express the full energy of the passion to which he dared no longer give vent, he turned round and left the apartment.

Mary Avenel looked at the stranger knight, while she was endeavouring to frame a request that he would not report the intemperate violence of her foster-brother to the prejudice of his family, in the mind of the Abbot. But Sir Pierce, the very pink of courtesy, conjectured her meaning from her embarrassment, and waited not to be entreated.

"Credit me, fairest Protection," said he, "your Affability is less than capable of seeing or hearing, far less of reading or retorting,ught of an unseemly nature which may have chanced while I enjoyed the Elysium of your presence. The winds of idle passion may indeed rudely agitate the bosom of the rude; but the heart of the courtier is polished to resist them. As the frozen lake resists not the influence of the breeze, even so—"

The voice of Dame Gleninning, in still more mournful tones, demanded Mary Avenel's attention, who instantly obeyed, not a little glad to escape from the compliments and similes of this court-like gallant. Nor was it apparently less a relief to

his part; for no sooner was she past the threshold of the room, than he exchanged the look of formal and elaborate politeness which had accompanied each word he had uttered hitherto, for an expression of the utmost lassitude and ennui; and after indulging in one or two portentous yawns, broke forth into a soliloquy.

"What the foul fiend sent this wench hither! As if it were not sufficient plague to be harboured in a hovel that would hardly serve for a dog's kennel in England, baited by a rude peasant-boy, and dependent on the faith of a mercenary ruffian, but I cannot even have time to muse over my own mishap, but must come aloft, frisk, fidget, and make speeches, to please this pale hectic phantom, because she has gentle blood in her veins! By mine honour, setting prejudices aside, the mill-wench is the more attractive of the two—But patience, Pierce Shafton; thou must not lose thy well-earned claim to be accounted a devout servant of the fair sex, a witty-brained, prompt, and accomplished courtier. Rather thank heaven, Pierce Shafton, which hath sent thee a subject, wherein, without derogating from thy rank, (since the honours of the Avenel family are beyond dispute,) thou mayest find a whetstone for thy witty compliments, a strap whereon to sharpen thine acute ingine, a butt wherewith to shoot the arrows of thy gallantry. For even as a Bilboa blade, the more it is rubbed, the brighter and the sharper will it prove, so—But what need I waste my stock of similitudes in holding converse with myself!—Yonder comes the mouldy retinue, like some half score of crows winging their way slowly up the valley—I hope, a'gad, they have not forgotten my trunk-mails of apparel amid the ample provision they have made for their own belly-timber—Mercy, a'gad, I were finely helped up if the vesture has miscarried among the thievish Borderers!"

Stung by this reflection, he ran hastily down stairs, and caused his horse to be saddled, that he might, as soon as possible, ascertain this important point, by meeting the Lord Abbot and his retinue as they came up the glen. He had not ridden a mile before he met them advancing with the slowness and decorum which became persons of their dignity and profession. The knight failed not to greet the Lord Abbot with all the formal compliments with which men of rank at that period exchanged courtesies. He had the good fortune to find that his mails were numbered among the train of baggage which attended upon the party; and, satisfied in that particular, he turned his horse's head, and accompanied the Abbot to the Tower of Glendearg.

Great, in the meanwhile, had been the turmoil of the good Dame Elspeth and her coadjutors, to prepare for the fitting reception of the Father Lord Abbot and his retinue. The monks had indeed taken care not to trust too much to the state of her pantry; but she was not the less anxious to make such additions as might enable her to chain the thanks of her feudal lord and spiritual father. Meeting Halbert, as, with his blood on fire, he returned from his altercation with her guest, she commanded him instantly to go forth to the hill, and get a return without fail, reminding him that he was not enough to go thither for his own pleasure, and must now do so for the credit of the house.

The Miller, who was now hastening his journey

homewards, promised to send up some salmon by his own servant. Dame Elspeth, who by this time thought she had guests enough, had begun to repent of her invitation to poor Myrie, and was just considering by what means, short of giving offence, she could send off the Maid of the Mill behind her father, and adjourn all her own aerial architecture till some future opportunity, when this unexpected generosity on the part of the sire rendered any present attempt to return his daughter on his hands too highly ungracious to be farther thought on. So the Miller departed alone on his homeward journey.

Dame Elspeth's sense of hospitality proved in this instance its own reward; for Myrie had dwelt too near the Convent to be altogether ignorant of the noble art of cookery, which her father patronized to the extent of consuming on festival days such dainties as his daughter could prepare in emulation of the luxuries of the Abbot's kitchen. Laying aside, therefore, her holiday kirtle, and adopting a dress more suitable to the occasion, the good-humoured maidon bared her snowy arms above the elbows; and, as Elspeth acknowledged, in the language of the time and country, took "entire and acauld part with her" in the labours of the day; shewing unparalleled talent, and indefatigable industry, in the preparation of *mortroux, blanc-manger*, and heaven knows what delicacies besides, which Dame Glendinning, unassisted by her skill, dared not even have dreamt of presenting.

Leaving this able substitute in the kitchen, and regretting that Mary Avenel was so brought up, that she could intrust nothing to her care, unless it might be seeling the great chamber strewn with rushes, and ornamented with such flowers and branches as the season afforded, Dame Elspeth hastily donned her best attire, and with a beating heart presented herself at the door of her little tower, to make her obeisance to the Lord Abbot as he crossed her humble threshold. Edward stood by his mother, and felt the same palpitation, which his philosophy was at a loss to account for. He was yet to learn how long it is ere our reason is enabled to triumph over the force of external circumstances, and how much our feelings are affected by novelty, and blunted by use and habit.

On the present occasion, he witnessed with wonder and awe the approach of some half-score of sterner, sober men upon sober palfreys, muffled in their long black garments, and only relieved by their white scapularies, shewing more like a funeral procession than aught else, and not quibbling their pace beyond that which permitted easy conversation and easy digestion. The sobriety of the scene was, indeed somewhat unlovely by the presence of Sir Pierce Shafton, who, to show that his skill in the manege was not inferior to his other accomplishments, kept alternately pressing and checking his gay courser, forcing him to plaffe, to caracole, to passage, and to do all the other feats of the school, to the great annoyance of the Lord Abbot, the wonted sobriety of whose palfrey became at length discomposed by the vivacity of his companion, while the dignitary kept crying out in hoarse alarm, "I do pray you, sir—Sir Knight—good now, Sir Pierce—Be quiet, Bepaidet, there is a good steed—soh, poor fellow?" and uttering all the other procreant and soothing exclamations by which a timid horseman usually bespeaks the favour of a

frisky companion, or of his own unquiet nag, and concluding the head-roll with a sincere *Deo gratias* so soon as he alighted in the court-yard of the Tower of Glendearg.

The inhabitants unanimously knelt down to kiss the hand of the Lord Abbot, a ceremony which even the monks were often condemned to. Good Abbot Boniface was too much flattered by the incidents of the latter part of his journey, to go through this ceremony with much solemnity, or indeed with much patience. He kept wiping his brow with a snow-white handkerchief with one hand, while another was abandoned to the homage of his vassals; and then signing the cross with his outstretched arm, and exclaiming, "Bless ye—bless ye, my children!" he hastened into the house, and murmured not a little at the darkness and steepness of the rugged winding stair, whereby he at length scaled the spence destined for his entertainment, and, overcome with fatigue, threw himself, I do not say into an easy chair, but into the easiest the apartment afforded.

CHAPTER XVI.

A courtier extraordinary, who by diet
Of meats and drinks, his temperate exorcise.
Choice music, frequent bath, his honary shifts
Of shirts and waistcoats, means to immortalize
Mortality itself, and makes the essence
Of his whole happiness the trim of court.

Magnetic Lady.

WHEN the Lord Abbot had suddenly and superciliously vanished from the eyes of his expectant vassals, the Sub-Prior made amends for the negligence of his principal, by the kind and affectionate greeting which he gave to all the members of the family, but especially to Dame Elspeth, her foster-daughter, and her son Edward. "Where," he even condescended to inquire, "is that naughty Nimrod, Halbert!—He hath not yet, I trust, turned, like his great prototype, his hunting-spear against man!"

"O no, an it please your reverence," said Dame Glendinning, "Halbert is up at the glen to get some venison, or surely he would not have been absent when such a day of honour dawned upon me and mine."

"Oh, to get savoury meat, such as our soul loveth," muttered the Sub-Prior; "it has been at times an acceptable gift.—I bid you good morrow, my good dame, as I must attend upon his lordship the Father Abbot."

"And O, reverend sir," said the good widow, detaining him, "if it may be your pleasure to take part with us if there is anything wrong; and if there is any thing wanted, to say that it is just coming, or to make some excuses your learning best knows how. Every bit of yassal and silver work have we been spoiled of since Pinkie Cleuch, when I lost poor Simon Glendinning, that was the wart of a'."

"Never mind—never fear," said the Sub-Prior, gently extricating his garment from the anxious grasp of Dame Elspeth, "the Refectory has with him the Abbot's plate and drinking cups; and I pray you to believe that whatever is short in your entertainment will be deemed amply made up in good-will."

So saying, he escaped from her and went into the

spence, where such preparations as haste permitted were making for the noon collation of the Abbot and the English knight. Here he found the Lord Abbot, for whom a cushion, composed of all the plaids in the house, had been unable to render Simon's huge elbow-chair a soft or comfortable place of rest.

"Benedicite!" said Abbot Boniface, "now marry fie upon these hard benches with all my heart—they are as uneasy as the *scabella* of our novices. Saint Jude be with us, Sir Knight, how have you contrived to pass over the night in this dungeon! An your bed was no softer than your seat, you might as well have slept on the stone couch of Saint Pacomius. After trotting a full ten miles, a man needs a softer seat than has fallen to my hard lot."

With sympathizing faces, the Sacristan and the Refectory ran to raise the Lord Abbot, and to adjust his seat to his mind, which was at length accomplished in some sort, though he continued alternately to bewail his fatigue, and to exult in the conscious sense of having discharged an arduous duty. "You errant cavaliers," said he, addressing the knights, "may now perceive that others have their travail and their toils to undergo as well as your honoured faculty. And this I will say for myself and the soldiers of Saint Mary, among whom I may be termed captain, that it is not our wont to flinch from the heat of the service, or to withdraw from the good fight. No, by Saint Mary!—no sooner did I learn that you were here, and cared not for certain reasons come to the Monastery, where, with as good will, and with more convenience, we might have given you a better reception, than, striking the table with my hammer, I called a brother—Timothy, said I, let them saddle Benedict—let them saddle my black palfrey, and bid the Sub-Prior and some half-score of attendants be in readiness to-morrow after matins—we would ride to Glendearg.—Brother Timothy stared, thinking, I imagine, that his ears had scarce done him justice—but I repeated my commands, and said, Let the Kitchen and Refectory go before to aid the poor vassals to whom the place belongs in making a suitable collation. So that you will consider, good Sir Piercie, our mutual incommodities, and forgive whatever you may find amiss."

"By my faith," said Sir Piercie Shafton, "there is nothing to forgive.—If you spiritual warriors have to submit to the grievous inconveniences which your lordship narrates, it would ill become me, a sinful and secular man, to complain of a bed as hard as a board, of broth which relished as if made of burnt wool, of flesh, which, in its sable and singed shape, seemed to put me on a level with Richard Cœur-de-Lion, when he ate up the head of a Moor carbonadoed, and of other viands savouring rather of the rusticity of this northern region."

"By the good Saints, sir," said the Abbot, somewhat touched in point of his character for hospitality, of which he was in truth a most faithful and zealous professor, "it grieves me to the heart that you have found our vassals no better provided for your reception.—Yet I scarce know to observe, that if Sir Piercie Shafton's affairs had permitted him to honour with his company our poor house of Saint Mary, he might have had less to complain of in respect of accommodations."

"To give your lordship the reasons," said Sir

"Pierce Shafton, "why I could not at this present time approach your dwelling, or avail myself of its well known and undoubted hospitality, craves either some delay, or," looking around him, "a limited audience."

The Lord Abbot immediately issued his mandate to the Refectory: "His thee to the kitchen, Brother Hilarius, and there make inquiry of our brother the Kitchener, within what time he opines that our collation may be prepared, since sin and sorrow it were, considering the hardships of this noble and gallant knight, no whit mentioning or weighing those we ourselves have endured, if we were now either to advance or retard the hour of refectory beyond the time when the viands are fit to be set before us."

Brother Hilarius parted with an eager alertness to execute the will of his Superior, and returned with the assurance, that punctually at one afternoon would the collation be ready.

"Before that time," said the accurate Refectory, "the wafers, flamma, and pastry-meat, will scarce have had the just degree of fire which learned pottingers prescribe as fittest for the body; and if it should be past one o'clock, were it but ten minutes, our brother the Kitchener opines, that the haunch of venison would suffer in spite of the skill of the little turn-broche whom he has recommended to your holiness by his praises."

"How!" said the Abbot, "a haunch of venison!—from whence comes that dainty! I remember not thou didst intimate its presence in thy lampers of vivers."

"So please your holiness and lordship," said the Refectory, "he is a son of the woman of the house who hath shot it and sent it in—killed but now; yet, as the animal heat hath not left the body, the Kitchener undertakes it shall be as tender as a young chicken—and this youth hath a special gift in shooting deer, and never misses the heart or the brain; so that the blood is not driven through the flesh, as happens too often with us. It is a hart of grace—your holiness has seldom seen such a haunch."

"Silence, Brother Hilarius," said the Abbot, wiping his mouth; "it is not becoming our order to talk of food so earnestly, especially as we must oft have our animal powers exhausted by fasting, and be accessible (as being ever mere mortals) to those signs of longing" (he again wiped his mouth) "which arise on the mention of victuals to an hungry man.—Minute down, however, the name of that youth—it is fitting merit should be rewarded, and he shall hereafter be a *frater ad succurrendum* in the kitchen and buttery."

"Alas! reverend Father, and my good lord," replied the Refectory, "I did inquiry after the youth, and I leave to one who professes the casque to the cow, and the sword of the flesh to the weapons of the spirit."

"And if it be so," said the Abbot, "see that thou retain him as a deputy-keeper and man-at-arms, and not as a lay brother of the Monastery—for old Tully, our preceptor, waxed dim-eyed, and hath twice spoiled a noble buck, by hitting him unawares on the haunch. Ah! 'tis a foul fault, the showing by evil-willing, evil-doing, evil-appetite, or otherwise, the good creatures indulged to us for our sin. Wherefore, devote us the service of this youth, Brother Hilarius, in the way that may

best suit him.—And now, Sir Pierce Shafton, since the fates have assigned us a space of well-nigh an hour, ere we dare hope to enjoy more than the vapour or savour of our repast, may I pray you, of your courtesy, to tell me the cause of this visit; and, above all, to inform us, why you will not approach our more pleasant and better furnished *hospitium*?"

"Reverend Father, and my very good lord," said Sir Pierce Shafton, "it is well known to your wisdom, that there are stone walls which have ears, and that secrecy is to be looked to in matters which concern a man's head."

The Abbot signed to his attendants, excepting the Sub-Prior, to leave the room, and then said, "Your valour, Sir Pierce, may freely unburden yourself before our faithful friend and counsellor Father Eustace, the benefits of whose advice we may too soon lose, inasmuch as his merits will speedily recommend him to an higher station, in which, we trust, he may find the blessing of a friend and adviser as valuable as himself, since I may say of him, as our claustral rhyme goeth,"

*Dixit Abbas ad prioris,
Tu es homo boni moris,
Quin semper minoris
Mili das concilia.*

Indeed," he added, "the office of Sub-Prior is altogether beneath our dear brother; nor can we elevate him unto that of Prior; which, for certain reasons, is at present kept vacant amongst us. Howbeit, Father Eustace is fully possessed of my confidence, and worthy of yours, and well may it be said of him, *Intravit in secretis nostris.*"

Sir Pierce Shafton bowed to the reverend brother, and, heaving a sigh, as if he would have burst his steel cuirass, he thus commenced his speech:—

"Certain, reverend sir, I may well heave such a suspiration, *quo* have, as it were, exchanged heaven for purgatory, leaving the lightsome sphere of the royal court of England, for a remote nook in this inaccessible desert—quitting the tilt-yard, where I was ever ready among my comrades to splinter a lance, either for the love of honour, or for the honour of love, in order to couch my knightly spear against base and pilfering besognies and marauders—exchanging the lighted halls, wherein I used nimble to pace the swift ocean, or to move with a loftier grace in the stately galliard, for this rugged and decayed dungeon of rusty-coloured stone—quitting the gay theatre, for the solitary chimney-nook of a Scottish dog-house—bartering the sounds of the soul-reviving lute, and the love-awakening viol-de-gamba, for the discordant squeak of a northern bagpipe—above all, exchanging the smiles of those beauties, who form a galaxy around the throne of England, for the cold courtesy of an untought damsel, and the bewildered stare of a miller's maiden. More might I say, of the exchange of the conversation of gallant knights and gay courtiers of mine own order and capacity, whose counsels are bright and vivid as the lightning, for that of monks and churchmen—but I were discourteous to urge that topic."

The Abbot listened to this list of complaints with great round eyes, which displayed no exact intelli-

¹ The rest of this doggerel rhyme may be found in Forbush's learned work on British Monachism.

goace of the orator's meaning; and when the knight paused to take breath, he looked with a doubtful and inquiring eye at the Sub-Prior, not well knowing in what tone he should reply, to an exordium so extraordinary. The Sub-Prior accordingly stepped in to the relief of his principal.

"We deeply sympathize with you, Sir Knight, in the several mortifications and hardships to which fate has subjected you, particularly in that which has thrown you into the society of those, who, as they were conscious they deserved not such an honour, so neither did they at all desire it. But all this goes little way to expound the cause of this train of disasters, or, in plainer words, the reason which has compelled you into a situation having so few charms for you."

"Gentle and reverend sir," replied the Knight, "forgive an unhappy person, who, in giving a history of his miseries, dilateth upon them extremely, even as he who, having fallen from a precipice, looketh upward to measure the height from which he hath been precipitated."

"Yea, but," said Father Eustace, "methinks it were wiser in him to tell those who come to lift him up, which of his bones have been broken."

"You, reverend sir," said the knight, "have, in the encounter of our wits, made a fair attain; whereas I may be in some sort said to have broken my staff across. Pardon me, grave sir, that I speak the language of the tilt-yard, which is doubtless strange to your reverend ears. — Ah! brave remort of the noble, the fair, and the gay! — Ah! throne of love, and citadel of honour! — Ah! celestial beauties, by whose bright eyes it is graced! Never more shall Pierce Shafton advance, as the centre of your radiant glances, couch his lance, and spur his horse at the sound of the spirit-stirring trumpets, nobly called the voice of war — never more shall he baffle his adversary's encounter boldly, break his spear dexterously, and, ambling around the lovely circle, receive the rewards with which beauty honours chivalry!"

Here he paused, wrung his hands, looked upwards, and seemed lost in contemplation of his own fallen fortunes.

"Mad, very mad," whispered the Abbot to the Sub-Prior; "I would we were fairly rid of him; few, of a truth, I expect he will proceed from raving to mischief — Were it not better to call up the rest of the brethren?"

But the Sub-Prior knew better than his Superior how to distinguish the jargon of affection from the ravings of insanity; and although the extremity of the knight's passion seemed altogether fantastic, yet he was not ignorant to what extravagances the fashion of the day can conduct its votaries.

Allowing, therefore, two minutes' space to permit the knight's enthusiastic feelings to exhaust themselves, he again gravely reminded him that the Lord Abbot had taken a journey, unwonted to his age and habits, solely to learn in what he could serve Sir Pierce Shafton — that it was altogether impossible he could do so without his receiving distinct information of the situation in which he had now sought refuge in Scotland. — "The day were

on," he observed, looking at the window; "and if the Abbot should be obliged to return to the Monastery without obtaining the necessary intelligence, the regret might be mutual, but the inconvenience was like to be all on Sir Pierce's own side."

The hint was not thrown away.

"O, goddess of courtesy!" said the knight, "can I have so far forgotten thy behests, as to make this good prelate's ease and time a sacrifice to my vain complaints! Know, then, most worthy, and not less worshipful, that I, your poor visiter and guest, am by birth nearly bound to the Pierce of Northumbreland, whose fame is so widely blown through all parts of the world where English worth hath been known. Now, this present Earl of Northumbreland, of whom I propose to give you the brief history —"

"It is altogether unnecessary," said the Abbot; "we know him to be a good and true nobleman, and a sworn upholder of our Catholic faith, in the spite of the heretical woman who now sits upon the throne of England. And it is specially as his kinsman, and as knowing that ye partake with him in such fervent and faithful belief and adherence to our holy Mother Church, that we say to you, Sir Pierce Shafton, that ye be heartily welcome to us, and that, as we wist how, we would labour to do you good service in your extremity."

"For such kind offer I rest your most humble debtor," said Sir Pierce; "nor need I at this moment say more than that my Right Honourable Cousin of Northumbreland, having devised with me and some others, the choice and picked spirits of the age, how and by what means the worship of God, according to the Catholic Church, might be again introduced into this distracted kingdom of England, (eff as one deviseth, by the assistance of his friend, to catch and to bridle a runaway steed,) it pleased him so deeply to intrust me in those communications, that my personal safety becomes, as it were, obnoxious or complicated therewith. Nathless, as we have had sudden reason to believe, this Princess Elizabeth, who maintaineth around her a sort of counsellors skilful in tracking whatever schemes may be pursued for bringing her title into challenge, or for erecting again the discipline of the Catholic church, has obtained certain knowledge of the trains which we had laid before us, and given fire unto them. Wherefore, my Right Honourable Cousin of Northumbreland, thinking it best belike that one man should take both blame and shame for the whole, did lay the burden of all this trafficking upon my back; which load I am the rather content to bear, in that he hath always shown himself my kind and honourable kinsman, as well as that my estate, I wot not how, hath of late been somewhat insufficient to maintain the expense of those braveries, wherewith it is incumbent on us, who are chosen and selected spirits, to distinguish ourselves from the vulgar."

"So that possibly," said the Sub-Prior, "your private affairs rendered a foreign journey less inconvenient to you than it might have been to the noble earl, your right worthy cousin?"

"Yea, are right, reverend sir," answered the courtier; "for ere — you have touched the point with a needle — My coat and expenses had been indeed somewhat brisk at the late campaign, and

A tilt-yard was a term of tilting used to express the champion's being tilted at the mark, or, in other words, struck his lance straight and fair against the breast or breast of his adversary. When a knight took the lance upon, he entered a total failure in striking the point of the weapon on the object of his aim.

journeys, and the flat-opp'd citizens had shewn themselves unwilling to furnish my pocket for new gallantries for the honour of the nation, as well as for mine own peculiar glory—and, to speak truth, it was in some part the hope of seeing these matters amended that led me to desire a new world in England."

"So that the miscarriage of your public enterprise, with the derangement of your own private affairs," said the Sub-Prior, "have induced you to seek Scotland as a place of refuge?"

"*Rem con*, once again," said Sir Pierce; "and not without good cause, since my neck, if I remained, might have been brought within the circumstances of a halter—and so speedy was my journey northward, that I had but time to exchange my peach-coloured doublet of Genoa velvet, thickly laid over with goldsmith's work, for this cuirass, which was made by Bonamico, of Milan, and travelled northward with all speed, judging that I might do well to visit my Right Honourable Cousin of Northumberland, at one of his numerous castles. But as I posted towards Alnwick, even with the speed of a star, which, darting from its native sphere, shoots wildly downwards, I was met at Northallerton by one Henry Vaughan, a servant of my right honourable kinsman, who shewed me, that as then I might not with safety come to his presence, seeing that, in obedience to orders from his court, he was obliged to issue out letters for my incarceration."

"This," said the Abbot, "seems but hard measure on the part of your honourable kinsman."

"It might be so judged, my lord," replied Sir Pierce; "nevertheless, I will stand to the death for the honour of my Right Honourable Cousin of Northumberland. Also, Henry Vaughan gave me, from my said cousin, a good horse, and a purse of gold, with two Border-prickers, as they are called, for my guides, who conducted me, by such roads and by-paths as have never been seen since the days of Sir Lancelot and Sir Tristram, into this kingdom of Scotland, and to the house of a certain baron, or one who holds the style of such, called Julian Avenel, with whom I found such reception as the place and party could afford."

"And that," said the Abbot, "must have been right wretched; for, to judge from the appetite which Julian sheweth when absent, he hath not, I judge, over-abundant provision at home."

"You are right, sir—your reverence is in the right," continued Sir Pierce; "we had but latten far, and, what was worse, a score to clear at the departure; for though this Julian Avenel called us to no reckoning, yet he did so extravagantly admire the fashion of my poniard—the poignant being of silver exquisitely hatched, and indeed the weapon being altogether a piece of exceeding rare device and beauty—that in faith I could not for very shame's sake but pray his acceptance of it; words which he gave me not the trouble of repeating twice, before he had stuck it into his greeny buff-belt, where, credit me, reverend sir, it shewed more like a butcher's knife than a gentleman's dagger."

"So goodly a gift might at least have purchased you a few days' hospitality," said Father Eustace.

"Reverend sir," said Sir Pierce, "had I talked with him, I should have been complimented out

of every remnant of my wardrobe—actually flayed, by the hospitable gods I swear it! Sir, he secured my spare doublet, and had a plunk at my galligaskins—I was enforced to heat a retreat before I was altogether unrigged. That Border knave, his serving-man, had a pluck at me too, and usurped a scarlet cassock and steel cuirass belonging to the page of my body, whom I was fain to leave behind me. In good time I received a letter from my Right Honourable Cousin, shewing me that he had written to you in my behalf, and sent to your charge two mails filled with wearing apparel—namely, my rich crimson silk doublet, slashed out and lined with cloth of gold, which I wore at the last revel, with baldric and trimmings to correspond—also two pair black silk slops, with hanging garters of carnation silk—also the flesh-coloured silken doublet, with the trimmings of fur, in which I danced the salvage man at the Gray's-Inn mummers—also,——"

"Sir Knight," said the Sub-Prior, "I pray you to spare the farther inventory of your wardrobe. The monks of Saint Mary's are no free-booting barons, and whatever part of your vestments arrived at our house, have been this day faithfully brought hither, with the mails which contained them. I may presume from what has been said, as we have indeed been given to understand by the Earl of Northumberland, that your desire is to remain for the present as unknown and as unnoticed, as may be consistent with your high worth and distinction!"

"Alas, reverend father!" replied the courtier, "a blade when it is in the scabbard cannot give lustre, a diamond when it is in the casket cannot give light, and worth, when it is couped by circumstances to obscure itself, cannot draw observation—my retreat can only attract the admiration of those few to whom circumstances permit its displaying itself."

"I conceive now, my venerable father and lord," said the Sub-Prior, "that your wisdom will assign such a course of conduct to this noble knight, as may be alike consistent with his safety, and with the weal of the community. For you wot well, that perilous strides have been made in these audacious days, to the destruction of all ecclesiastical foundations, and that our holy community has been repeatedly menaced. Hitherto they have found no flaw in our ramparts; but a party, friendly as well to the Queen of England, as to the heretical doctrines of the schismatical church, or even to worse and wilder forms of heresy, prevails now at the court of our sovereign, who dare not yield to her suffering clergy the protection she would gladly extend to them."

"My lord, and reverend sir," said the knight, "I will gladly relieve you of my presence, while ye entrust this matter at your freedom; and to speak truly, I am desirous to see in what case the chamberlain of my noble kinsman hath found my wardrobe, and how he hath packed the same, and whether it has suffered from the journey—there are four suits of as pure and elegant device as ever the fancy of a fair lady doted upon, every one having a treble, and appropriate change of ribbons, trimmings, and fringes, which, in case of need, may as it were renew each of them, and multiply the four into twelve.—There is also my new coloured riding-suit, and three cut-work shirts with

falling hands — I pray you, pardon me — I must needs see how matters stand with them without farther dallying."

Thus speaking, he left the room; and the Sub-Prior, looking after him significantly, added, "Where the treasure is will the heart be also."

"Saint Mary preserve our wits!" said the Abbot, stunned with the knight's abundance of words; "were man's brains ever so stuffed with silk and broadcloth, cut-work, and I wot not what besides! And what could move the Earl of Northumberland to assume for his bosom counsellor, in matters of depth and danger, such a feather-brained coxcomb as this?"

"Had he been other than what he is, venerable father," said the Sub-Prior, "he had been less fitted for the part of scape-goat, to which his Right Honourable Cousin had probably destined him from the commencement, in case of their plot failing. I know something of this Pierce Shafton. The legitimacy of his mother's descent from the Percio family, the point on which he is most jealous, hath been called in question. If hairbrained courage, and an outrageous spirit of gallantry, can make good his pretensions to the high lineage he claims, these qualities have never been denied him. For the rest, he is one of the ruffling gallants of the time, like Rowland Yorke, Stukely, and others, who wear out their fortunes, and endanger their lives, in idle braveries, in order that they may be esteemed the only choice gallants of the time; and afterwards endeavour to repair their estate, by engaging in the desperate plots and conspiracies which wiser heads have devised. To use one of his own conceited similitudes, such courageous fools resemble hawks, which the wiser conspirator keeps hooded and blinded on his wrist until the quarry is on the wing, and who are then flown at them."

"Saint Mary," said the Abbot, "he were an evil guest to introduce into our quiet household. Our young monks make bustle enough, and more than is becoming God's servants, about their outward attire already — this knight were enough to turn their brains, from the *Vestianus* down to the very scullion boy."

"A worse evil might follow," said the Sub-Prior: "in these bad days, the patrimony of the church is bought and sold, forfeited and distrained as if it were the unhallowed soil appertaining to a secular baron. Think what penalty awaits us, were we convicted of harbouring a rebel to her whom they call the Queen of England! There would neither be wanting Scottish parasites to beg the lands of the foundation, nor an army from England to burn and harry the Halidome. The men of Scotland were once Scotsmen, firm and united in their love of their country, and throwing every other consideration aside when the frontier was menaced — now they are — what shall I call them — the one part French, the other part English, considering their dear native country merely as a prize-fighting stage, upon which foreigners are welcome to decide their quarrels."

"Benedicite!" replied the Abbot, "they are indeed slippery and evil times."

"And therefore," said Father Eustace, "we must walk warily — we must not, for example,

bring this man — this Sir Pierce Shafton, to our house of Saint Mary's."

"But how then shall we dispose of him?" replied the Abbot; "bethink thee that he is a sufferer for holy Church's sake — that his patron, the Earl of Northumberland, hath been our friend, and that, lying so near us, he may work us weal or woe according as we deal with his kinsman."

"And, accordingly," said the Sub-Prior, "for these reasons, as well as for discharge of the great duty of Christian charity, I would protect and relieve this man. Let him not go back to Julian Avenel — that unconscionable baron would not stick to plunder the exiled stranger — Let him remain here — the spot is secluded, and if the accommodation be beneath his quality, discovery will become the less likely. We will make such means for his convenience as we can devise."

"Will he be persuaded, thinkest thou?" said the Abbot; "I will leave my own travelling bed for his repose, and send up a suitable easy-chair."

"With such easements," said the Sub-Prior, "he must not complain; and then, if threatened by any sudden danger, he can soon come down to the sanctuary, where we will harbour him in secret until means can be devised of dismissing him in safety."

"Were we not better," said the Abbot, "send him on to the court, and get rid of him at once?"

"Ay, but at the expense of our friends — this butterfly may fold his wings, and lie under cover in the cold air of Glendearg; but were he at Holyrood, he would, did his life depend on it, expand his spangled drapery in the eyes of the queen and court — Rather than fail of distinction, he would sue for love to our gracious sovereign — the eyes of all men would be upon him in the course of three short days, and the international peace of the two ends of the island endangered for a creature, who, like a silly moth, cannot abstain from fluttering round a light."

"Thou hast prevailed with me, Father Eustace," said the Abbot, "and it will go hard but I improve on thy plan — I will send up in secret, not only household stuff, but wine and wassell-bread. There is a young swankie here who shoots venison well. I will give him directions to see that the knight lacks none."

"Whatever accommodation he can have, which infernally is not a risk of discovery," said the Sub-Prior, "it is our duty to afford him."

"Nay," said the Abbot, "we will do more, and will instantly despatch a servant express to the keeper of our revery to send us such things as he may want, even this night. See it done, good father."

"I will," answered Father Eustace; "but I hear the gull clamorous for some one to trust his points." He will be fortunate if he lights on any one here who can do him the office of groom of the chamber."

"I would he would appear," said the Abbot, "for here comes the Rebecksoner with the collation — By my faith, the ride hath given me a sharp appetite!"

* The joints were the sides of cord or ribbon, (as called, because pointed with metal like the hoofs of women's shoes), which attached the doublet to the hose. They were very numerous, and required assistance to do them properly, which was called *frapping*.

CHAPTER XVII.

*I'll seek for other aid—Spirits, they say,
Fit round invisible, as thick as smokes
Dance in the autumn. If that spirit
Of our companion's sign can compel them,
They shall hold council with me.*

JAMES DUFF.

THE reader's attention must be recalled to Halbert Glendinning, who had left the Tower of Glendearg immediately after his quarrel with its new guest, Sir Pierce Shafton. As he walked with a rapid pace up the glen, Old Martin followed him, beseeching him to be less hasty.

"Halbert," said the old man, "you will never live to have white hair, if you take fire thus at every spark of provocation."

"And why should I wish it, old man," said Halbert, "if I am to be the butt that every fool may aim shaft of scorn against?—What avails it, old man, that you yourself move, sleep, and wake, eat thy niggard meal, and repose on thy hard pallet?—Why art thou so well pleased that the morning should call thee up to dilly toil, and the evening again lay thee down a wearied-out wretch? Were it not better sleep and wake no more, than to undergo this dull exchange of labour for insensibility and of insensibility for labour?"

"God help me," answered Martin, "there may be truth in what thou sayest—but walk slower, for my old limbs cannot keep pace with your young legs—walk slower, and I will tell you why age, though unlovely, is yet endurable."

"Speak on then," said Halbert, slackening his pace, "but remember we must seek venison to refresh the fatigues of these holy men, who will this morning have achieved a journey of ten miles; and if we reach not the Brocksburn head, we are scarce like to see an antler."

"Then know, my good Halbert," said Martin, "whom I love as my own son, that I am satisfied to live till death calls me, because my Maker wills it. Ay, and although I spend what men call a hard life, pinched with cold in winter, and burnt with heat in summer, though I feed hard and sleep hard, and am held mean and despised, yet I bethink me that were I of no use on the face of this fair creation, God would withdraw me from it."

"Thou poor old man," said Halbert, "and can such a vain conceit as this of thy fancied use, reconcile thee to a world where thou art the poorest of a part?"

"My part was nearly as poor," said Martin, "my person nearly as much despised, the day that I saved my mistress and her child from perishing in the wilderness."

"Right, Martin," answered Halbert, "there, indeed, thou didst what might be a sufficient apology for a whole life of insignificance."

"And do you account it for nothing, Halbert, that I should have the power of giving you a lesson of patience, and submission to the destinies of Providence? Methinks there is use for the gray hairs on the old scalp, were it but to instruct the green head by precept and by example."

Halbert held down his face, and remained silent for a minute or two; and then resumed his discourse: "Martin, soon thou mightst changed in me of late."

"Surely," said Martin, "I have always known

you hasty, wild, and inconsiderate, rude, and prompt to speak at the valley and without reflection; but now, methinks, your bearing, without losing its natural fire, has something in it of force and dignity which it had not before. It seems as if you had fallen asleep a while, and awakened a gentleman."

"Thou canst judge, then, of noble bearing?" said Halbert.

"Surely," answered Martin, "in some sort I can; for I have travelled through court, and camp, and city, with my master Walter Avenel, although he could do nothing for me in the long run, but give me room for two score of sheep on the hill—and surely even now, while I speak with you, I feel sensible that my language is more refined than it is my wont to use, and that—though I know not the reason—the rude northern dialect, so familiar to my tongue, has given place to a more town-bred speech."

"And this change is thyself and me, thou canst by no means account for?" said young Glendinning.

"Change?" replied Martin, "by our Lady it is not so much a change which I feel, as a recalling and renewing sentiments and expressions which I had some thirty years since, ere Tibb and I set up our humble household. It is singular, that your society should have this sort of influence over me, Halbert, and that I should never have experienced it ere now."

"Thinkest thou," said Halbert, "thou seest in me aught that can raise me from this base, low, despised state, into one where I may rank with those proud men, who now despise my clownish poverty?"

Martin paused an instant, and then answered "Doubtless you may, Halbert; as broken a ship has come to land. Heard you never of Hughie Dun, who left this Halidome some thirty-five years gone by? A deliverly fellow was Hughie—could read and write like a priest, and could wield brand and buckler with the best of the riders. I mind him—the like of him was never seen in the Halidome of Saint Mary's, and so was seen of the pre-ferment that God sent him."

"And what was that?" said Halbert, his eyes sparkling with eagerness.

"Nothing less," answered Martin, "than body-servant to the Archbishop of Saint Andrews!"

Halbert's countenance fell.—"A servant—and to a priest? Was this all that knowledge and activity could raise him to?"

Martin, in his turn, looked with wistful surprise in the face of his young friend. "And to what could fortune lead him farther?" answered he. "The son of a kirk-fear is not the stuff that lords and knights are made of. Courage and school craft cannot change churl's blood into gentle blood, I trow. I have heard, forby, that Hughie Dun left a good five hundred pounds of Scots money to his only daughter, and that she married the Balfour of Pittenweem."

At this moment, and while Halbert was embarrassed with devising a suitable answer, a deer bounded across their path. In an instant the crossbow was at the youth's shoulder, the belt whistled, and the deer, after giving one bound upright, dropped dead on the green sward.

"There lies the venison our dame wanted," said Martin; "who would have thought of an out-lying stag being so low down the glen at this season?—"

And it is a hart of grease too, in full season, and three inches of fat on the bricket. Now this is all your luck, Halbert, that follows you, go where you like. Were you to put in for it, I would warrant you were made one of the Abbot's yeoman-prickers, and ride about in a purple doublet as bold as the best."

"Tush, man," answered Halbert, "I will serve the Queen or no one. Take thou care to have down the venison to the Tower, since they expect it. I will of to the moss. I have two or three bird-bolts at my girdle, and it may be I shall find wild-fowl."

He hastened his pace, and was soon out of sight. Martin paused for a moment, and looked after him. "There goes the making of a right gallant stripling, an ambition have not the spoiling of him—Serve the Queen! said he. By my faith, and she hath worse servants, from all that I e'er heard of him. And wherefore should he not keep a high head! They that ettle to the top of the ladder will at least get up some rounds. They that mint at a gown of gold, will always get a sleeve of it. But come, sir, (addressing the stag,) you shall go to Glendearg on my two legs somewhat more slowly than you were frisking it even now on your own four nimble shanks. Nay, by my faith, if you be so heavy, I will content me with the best of you, and that's the haunch and the nimbles, and e'en heave up the rest on the old oak-tree yonder, and come back for it with one of the vaulds."

While Martin returned to Glendearg with the venison, Halbert prosecuted his walk, breathing more easily since he was free of his companion. "The domestic of a proud and lazy priest—body-squire to the Archbishop of Saint Andrews," he repeated to himself; "and this, with the privilege of allying his blood with the Raile of Pittenweem, is thought a preferment worth a brave man's struggling for;—nay more a preferment which, if allowed, should crown the hopes, past, present, and to come, of the son of a Kirk-vassal! By Heaven, but that I find in me a reluctance to practise their arts of nocturnal rapine, I would rather take the jack and lance, and join with the Border-riders.—Something I will do. Here, degraded and dishonoured, I will not live the scorn of each whiffling stranger from the South, because, forsooth, he wears tinkling spurs on a tawny boot. This thing—this phantom, be it what it will, I will see it once more. Since I spoke with her, and touched her hand, thoughts and feelings have dawned on me, of which my former life had not even dreamed; but shall I, who feel my father's glen too narrow for my expanding spirit, brook to be hearded in it by this vain gowgaw of a courtier, and in the sight too of Mary Avenel? I will not stoop to it, by Heaven!"

As he spoke thus, he arrived in the sequestered glen of Corri-man-achin, as it was upon the hour of noon. A few moments he remained looking upon the fountain, and doubting in his own mind with what countenance the White Lady might receive him. She had not indeed expressly forbidden his again evoking her; but yet there was something in such a prohibition implied in the farewell, which recommended him to wait for another guide.

Halbert Glendinning did not long, however, allow himself to pause. Hardihood was the natural characteristic of his mind; and under the expansion and modification which his feelings had lately undergone, it had been augmented rather than diminished. He drew his sword, and the buskin from his foot, bowed three times with deliberation towards the fountain, and as often towards the tree, and repeated the same rhyme as formerly,—

"Thrice to the holy brake—
Thrice to the wall:—
I bid thee awake,
White Maid of Avenel!"

Noon gleams on the lake—
Moon glows on the fell—
Wake thee, O wake,
White Maid of Avenel!"

His eye was on the holly bush as he spoke the last line; and it was not without an involuntary shuddering that he saw the air betwixt his eye and that object become more dim, and condense, as it were, into the faint appearance of a form, through which, however, so thin and transparent was the first appearance of the phantom, he could discern the outline of the bush, as through a veil of fine crape. But, gradually, it darkened into a more substantial appearance, and the White Lady stood before him with displeasure on her brow. She spoke, and her speech was still song, or rather measured chant; but, as if now more familiar, it flowed occasionally in modulated blank-verse, and at other times in the lyrical measure which she had used at their former meeting.

"This is the day when the fairy kind
Sit weeping alone for their hopeless lot,
And the wood-maiden sighs to the sighing wind,
And the mer-maiden weeps in her crystal grot:
For this is the day that a deed was wrought,
In which we have neither part nor share,
For the children of clay was salvation bought,
But not for the forms of sea or air!
And ever the mortal is most forlorn,
Who meeteth our race on the Friday morn."

"Spirits!" said Halbert Glendinning boldly, "it is bootless to threaten one who holds his life at no rate. Thine anger can but slay; nor do I think thy power extendeth, or thy will stretcheth, so far. The terrors which your race produce upon others, are vain against me. My heart is hardened against fear, as by a sense of despair. If I am, as thy words infer, of a race more peculiarly the care of Heaven than thine, it is mine to call, it must be thine to answer. I am the nobler being."

As he spoke, the figure looked upon him with a fierce and ireful countenance, which, without losing the similitude of that which it usually exhibited, had a wilder and more exaggerated cast of features. The eyes seemed to contract and become more fiery, and slight convulsions passed over the face, as if it was about to be transformed into something hideous. The whole appearance assembled those faces which the imagination summons up when it is disturbed by dreams, but which do not remain under the visionary's command, and, beautiful in their first appearance, become wild and grotesque ere we can arrest them.

But when Halbert had concluded his bold speech, the White Lady stood before him with the same pale, fixed, and melancholy aspect which she usually bore. He had expected the agitation which she exhibited would conclude in some singular

metamorphosis. Folding her arms on her bosom, the phantom replied,—

"During youth I for thee it is well,
Here calling me in haunted dell,
That thy heart has not quail'd,
Nor thy courage fail'd,
And that thou couldst break
The angry look
Of Her of Avenel.
Dad one imb silver,
Or an opal quiver,
Thou wert lost far o'er.
Though I am form'd from the ether blue,
And my blood is of the unblen dew,
And thou art framed of mud and dust,
'Tis thine to speak, reply I must."

"I demand of thee, then," said the youth, "by what charm it is that I am thus altered in mind and in wisdom—that I think no longer of deer or dog, of bow or bolt—that my soul spurns the bounds of this obscure glen—that my blood boils at an insult from one by whose stirrup I would some days since have run for a whole summer's morn, contented and honoured by the notice of a single word! Why to I now seek to mate me with princes, and knights, and nobles!—Am I the same, who but yesterday, as it were, slumbered in contented obscurity, but who am to-day awakened to glory and ambition!—Speak—tell me, if thou canst, the meaning of this change!—Am I spell-bound!—or have I till now been under the influence of a spell, that I feel as another being, yet am conscious of remaining the same! Speak and tell me, is it to thy influence that the change is owing!"

The White Lady replied,—

"A mightier wizard far than I
Wields o'er the universe his power,
Him owns the eagle in the sky,
The turtle in the bow.
Changeful in shape, yet mightiest still,
He wields the heart of man at will,
From ill to good, from good to ill,
In cot and castle-tower."

"Speak not thus darkly," said the youth, colouring so deeply, that face, neck, and hands, were in a sanguine glow; "make me sensible of thy purpose."

The spirit answered,—

"Ask thy heart, whose secret cell
Is fill'd with Mary Avenel!
Ask thy pride, why scornful look
In Mary's view it will not brook?
Ask it, why thou seek'st to rise
Among the mighty and the wise?
Why thou aspir'st thy lofty lot?
Why thy passions are forgot?
Why thou would'st in bloody strife
Mend thy luck or lose thy life?
Ask thy heart, and it shall tell,
Sighing from its secret cell,
'Tis for Mary Avenel."

"Tell me, then," said Halbert, his cheek still deeply crimsoned, "alas who hast said to me that which I dared not say to myself, by what means shall I urge my passion—by what means make it known?"

The White Lady replied,—

"Do not ask me;
On doubts like these thou canst not task me
We only show the passing show
Of human passion's ebb and flow;
And view the patient's idle glance
As darkness thro' the visionary dance,
When dream'd dreams, floating bright,
Gaze o'er the scene of light,
And seem to see their glimmer'd gleams,
But find no influence from their beams."

"Yet thine own fate," replied Halbert, "unless men greatly err, is linked with that of mortals?"

The phantom answered,—

"By the mysterious link'd, our fated race
Holds strange connection with the sons of men.
The star that rose upon the House of Avenel,
When Norman Urie first assumed the name,
That star, when culminating in its orbit,
Shot from its sphere a drop of diamond dew,
And this bright fell resented it—and a Spirit
Edg'd from the fountain, and her date of life
Hath to existence with the House of Avenel,
And with the star that rules it."

"Speak yet more plainly," answered young Glendinning; "of this I can understand nothing. Say, what hath forged thy wretched link of destiny with the House of Avenel! Say, especially, what fate now overhangs that house?"

The White Lady replied,—

"Look on my girdle—on this thread of gold—
'Tis fine as web of lightest gossamer,
And, but there is a spell on 't, would not bind,
Light as they are, the folds of my thin robe.
But when 'twas don'd, it was a massive chain,
Such might bind the champion of the Jews,
Even when his locks were longest—it hath divided,
Hath sunder'd in its substance and its strength,
As sunk the greatness of the House of Avenel.
When this frail thread given way, I to the elements
Reigns the principles of life they lent me
Ask me no more of this!—the stars forbid it."

"Then canst thou read the stars," answered the youth, "and mayest tell me the fate of my passion, if thou canst not aid it?"

The White Lady again replied,—

"Dim burns the once bright star of Avenel,
Dim as the beacon when the storm is nigh,
And the o'er-weathered wander leaves the light-house,
There is an influence sorrowful and fearful,
That dogs its downward course. Dismal passion,
Fierce hate and rivalry, are in the aspect
That lowers upon its fortunes."

"And rivalry!" repeated Glendinning; "it is then as I feared!—But shall that English silk-worm presume to board me in my father's house, and in the presence of Mary Avenel!—Give me to meet him, spirit,—give me to do away the vain distinction of rank on which he refuses me the combat. Place us on equal terms, and gleam the stars with what aspect they will, the sword of my father shall control their influences."

She answered as promptly as before,—

"Complain not of me, child of day,
If to thy harm I yield the way.
We, who near thy sphere above,
Know not nought of hate or love;
As will or wisdom rules thy mood,
My gifts to evil turn, or good."

"Give me to redeem my honour," said Halbert Glendinning—"give me to return on my proud rival the insults he has thrown off me, and let the rest fare as it will. If I cannot revenge my wrong, I shall sleep quiet, and know nought of my disgrace."

The phantom fail'd not to reply,—

"When fierce Shafon boasts his high,
Let this token meet his eye.
The sun is winking from the dell,
Thy wish is granted—fare thee well!"

As the White Lady spoke or chanted these last words, she smil'd from her looks a silver beaming

around which they were twisted, and gave it to Halbert Glendinning; then shaking her dishevelled hair till it fell like a veil around her, the outlines of her form gradually became as diffuse as her flowing tresses, her countenance grew pale as the moon in her first quarter, her features became indistinguishable, and she melted into the air.

Habit inures us to wonders; but the youth did not find himself alone by the fountain without experiencing, though in a much less degree, the revelation of spirits which he had felt upon the phantom's former disappearance. A doubt strongly pressed upon his mind, whether it were safe to avail himself of the gifts of a spirit which did not even pretend to belong to the class of angels, and might, for aught he knew, have a much worse lineage than that which she was pleased to avow. "I will speak of it," he said, "to Edward, who is clerically learned, and will tell me what I should do. And yet, no—Edward is scrupulous and wary.—I will prove the effect of her gift on Sir Piercie Shafton if he again braves me, and by the issue, I will be myself a sufficient judge whether there is danger in resorting to her counsel. Home, then, home—and we shall soon learn whether that home shall longer hold me; for not again will I brook insult, with my father's sword by my side, and Mary for the spectator of my disgrace."

CHAPTER XVIII.

I give thee eightpence a-day.
And my bow shall thou bear,
And over all the north country,
I make thee the chief ryder.
And I thirtypence a-day, quoth the queen;
By God and by my fay,
Come fetch thy payment when thou wilt,
No man shall say thee nay.

William of Cloudesley.

THE manners of the age did not permit the inhabitants of Glendurg to partake of the collation which was placed in the apence of that ancient tower, before the Lord Abbot and his attendants, and Sir Piercie Shafton. Dame Glendinning was excluded, both by inferiority of rank and by sex, for (though it was a rule often neglected) the Superior of Saint Mary's was debarred from taking his meals in female society. To Mary Avenel the latter, and to Edward Glendinning the former, incapacity attached; but it pleased his lordship to require their presence in the apartment, and to say sundry kind words to them upon the ready and hospitable reception which they had afforded him.

The smoking haunch now stood upon the table; a napkin, white as snow, with due reverence, tucked under the chin of the Abbot by the Refectory: and noight was wanting to commence the repast, save the presence of Sir Piercie Shafton, who at length appeared, glittering like the sun, in a carnation-velvet doublet, slashed and puffed out with cloth of silver, his hat of the newest block, surrounded by a husband of goldsmith's work, while around his neck he wore a collar of gold, set with rubies and topazes so rich, that it vindicated his anxiety for the safety of his baggage from being deposited upon his love of mere finery. This gorgeous collar or chain, resembling those worn by the knights of the highest orders of chivalry,

fell down on his breast, and terminated in a medallion.

"We waited for Sir Piercie Shafton," said the Abbot, hastily assuming his place in the great chair which the Kitchener advanced to the table with ready hand.

"I pray your pardon, reverend father, and my good lord," replied that pink of courtesy; "I did but wait to cast my riding along, and to transmute myself into some civil form meet for this worshipful company."

"I cannot but praise your gallantry, Sir Knight," said the Abbot, "and your prudence also, for choosing the fitting time to appear thus adorned. Certain had that goodly chain been visible in some part of your late progress, there was risk that the lawful owner might have parted company therewith."

"This chain, said your reverence?" answered Sir Piercie; "surely it is but a toy, a trifle, a slight thing which shews but poorly with this doublet—marry, when I wear that of the murrey-coloured double-piled Genoa velvet, puffed out with cyprus, the gems, being relieved and set off by the darker and more grave ground of the stuff, shew like stars giving a lustre through dark clouds."

"Nothing doubt ye," said the Abbot, "but I pray you to sit down at the board."

But Sir Piercie had now got into his element, and was not easily interrupted—"I own," he continued, "that slight as the toy is, it might perchance have had some captivation for Julian—Santa Maria!" said he, interrupting himself; "what was I about to say, and my fair and beauteous Protection, or shall I rather term her my Discretion, here in presence!—Indiscreet hath it been in your Affability, O most lovely Discretion, to suffer a stray word to have broke out of the pen-fold of his mouth, that might overleap the fence of civility, and trespass on the manor of decorum."

"Marry!" said the Abbot, somewhat impatiently, "the greatest discretion that I can see in the matter is, to eat your victuals being hot—Father Eustace, say the Benedicite, and cut up the haunch."

The Sub-Prior readily obeyed the first part of the Abbot's injunction, but paused upon the second—"It is Friday, most reverend," he said in Latin, desirous that the hint should escape, if possible, the ears of the stranger.

"We are travellers," said the Abbot, in reply, "and *viatoribus licet*—You know the canon—a traveller must eat: what food his hard fate sets before him.—I grant you all a dispensation to eat flesh this day, conditionally that you, brethren, say the Confiteor at curfew time, that the knights give alms to his ability, and that all and each of you fast from flesh on each day within the next month that shall seem most convenient; wherefore fall to and eat your food with cheerful countenance, and you, Father Refectory, *de missis*."

While the Abbot was thus stating the conditions on which his indulgence was granted, he had already half finished a slice of the noble haunch, and now washed it down with a flagon of rhenish, modestly tempered with water.

"Well it is said," he observed, as he required from the Refectory another slice, "that rhenish is its own reward; for though this is but human fare, and hastily prepared, and eaten in a poor chamber, I do not remember me of having had such an

appetite since I was a simple brother in the Abbey of Dundrennan, and was wont to labour in the garden from morning until noon, when our Abbot struck the *Cymbalum*. Then would I enter keen with hunger, paroled with thirst, (*de mili cibus quare, et moris sit*) and partake with appetite of whatever was set before us, according to our rule; feast or fast-day, *carissae* or *penitentie*, was the same to me. I had no stomach complaints then, which now crave both the aid of wine and choice cookery, to render my food acceptable to my palate, and easy of digestion."

"It may be, holy father," said the Sub-Prior, "an occasional ride to the extremity of Saint Mary's patrimony, may have the same happy effect on your health as the air of the garden at Dundrennan."

"Perchance, with our patroness's blessing, such progresses may advantage us," said the Abbot; "having an especial eye that our venison is carefully killed by some woodsman that is master of his craft."

"If the Lord Abbot will permit me," said the Kitchener, "I think the best way to assure his lordship on that important point, would be to retain as a yeoman-pricker, or deputy-ranger, the eldest son of this good woman, Dame Glendinning, who is here to wait upon us. I should know by mine office what belongs to killing of game, and I can safely pronounce, that never saw I, or any other *coquinarius*, a bolt so justly shot. It has cloven the very heart of the buck."

"What speak you to us of one good shot, father?" said Sir Piercie; "I would advise you that such no more maketh a shooter, than doth one swallow make a summer—I have seen this springald of whom you speak, and if his hand can send forth his shafts as boldly as his tongue doth utter presumptuous speeches, I will own him as good an archer as Robin Hood."

"Marry," said the Abbot, "and it is fitting we know the truth of this matter from the dame herself; for ill advised were we to give way to any rashness in this matter, whereby the bounties which Heaven and our patroness provide might be unskillfully mangled, and rendered unfit for worthy men's use.—Stand forth, therefore, Dame Glendinning, and tell to us, as thy liege lord and spiritual Superior, using plainness and truth, without either fear or favour, as being a matter wherein we are deeply interested, Dost this son of thine use his bow as well as the Father Kitchener avows to us?"

"So please your noble fatherhood," answered Dame Glendinning, with a deep curtsy, "I should know somewhat of archery by my cost, seeing my husband—God ansooize him!—was slain in the field of Pinkie with an arrow-shot, while he was fighting under the Kirk's banner, as became a liege vassal of the Hallidome. He was a valiant man, please your reverence, and an honest; and saying that he loved a bit of venison, and shifted for his living at a time as Border-men will sometimes do, I wot not of him that he did. And yet, though I have paid for mase after mase to the master of a forty shilling, besides a quarter of wheat and four fitches of rye, I can have no venison, yet that he has been delivered from purgatory."

"Dame," said the Lord Abbot, "this shall be taken into heedfully; and since thy husband fell,

as thou sayest, in the Kirk's quarrel, and under her banner, rely upon it that we will have him out of purgatory forthwith—that is, always provided he be there.—But it is not of thy husband whom we now devise to speak, but of thy son; not of a shot Scotsman, but of a shot deer.—Wherefore I say, answer me to the point, is thy son a practised archer, ay or no?"

"Alack! my reverend lord," replied the widow, "and my craft would be better tilted, if I could answer your reverence that he is not.—Practised archer!—marry, holy sir, I would he would practise something else—cross-bow and long-bow, hand-gun and hackbut, falconet and saker, he can shoot with them all. And if it would please this right honourable gentleman, our guest, to hold out his hat at the distance of a hundred yards, our Halbert shall send shaft, bolt, or bullet through it, (so that right honourable gentleman averre not, but hold out steady,) and I will forfeit a quarter of barley if he touch but a knot of his ribands. I have seen our old Martin do as much, and so has our right reverend the Sub-Prior, if he be pleased to remember it."

"I am not like to forget it, dame," said Father Eustace; "for I knew not which most to admire, the composure of the young marksman, or the steadiness of the old mark. Yet I presume not to advise Sir Piercie Shafton to subject his valuable beaver, and yet more valuable person, to such a risk, unless it should be his own special pleasure."

"Be assured it is not," said Sir Piercie Shafton, something hastily; "be well assured, holy father, that it is not. I dispute not the lad's qualities, for which your reverence vouches. But bows are but wood, strings are but flax, or the silk-worm's excrement at best; archers are but men, fingers may slip, eyes may dazzle, the blindest may hit the butt, the best marker may shoot a bow's length beside. Therefore will we try no perilous experiments."

"Be that as you will, Sir Piercie," said the Abbot; "meantime we will name this youth bow-bearer in the forest granted to us by good King David, that the chase might recreate our wearied spirits, the flesh of the deer improve our poor commons, and the hides cover the books of our library, thus tending at once to the sustenance of body and soul."

"Kneel down, woman, kneel down," said the Refectiener and the Kitchener, with one voice, to Dame Glendinning, "and kiss his lordship's hand, for the grace which he has granted to thy son."

They then, as if they had been chanting, the service and the responses, set off in a sort of dactyl, enumerating the advantages of the situation.

"A green gown and a pair of leathern galligaskins every Pentecost," said the Kitchener.

"Four marks by the year at Candlemas," answered the Refectiener.

"An hoghead of ale at Martinmas, of the double-strike, and single ale at pleasure, as he shall agree with the Cellarer."

"Who is a reasonable man," said the Abbot, "and will encourage an active servant of the cell-vant."

"A mase of broth and a dole of mutton or beef, at the Kitchener's, on each high holiday," sustained the Kitchener.

"The gang of two cows and a palfrey on our Lady's meadow," answered his brother officer.

"An ox-hide to make bukkins of yearly, because of the brambles," echoed the Kitchener.

"And various other perquisites, *quæ nund præscribere longum*," said the Abbot, summing, with his own lordly voice, the advantages attached to the office of conventual bow-hearer.

Dame Glendinning was all this while on her knees, her head mechanically turning from the one church-officer to the other, which, as they stood one on each side of her, had much the appearance of a figure moved by clock-work, and so soon as they were silent, most devoutly did she kiss the munificent hand of the Abbot. Conscious, however, of Halbert's intractability in some points, she could not help qualifying her grateful and reiterated thanks for the Abbot's bountiful proffer, with a hope that Halbert would see his wisdom, and accept of it.

"How," said the Abbot, bending his brows, "accept of it!—Woman, is thy son in his right wits?"

Elspeth, stunned by the tone in which this question was asked, was altogether unable to reply to it. Indeed, any answer she might have made could hardly have been heard, as it pleased the two office-bearers of the Abbot's table again to recommence their alternate dialogue.

"Refuse!" said the Kitchener.

"Refuse!" answered the Refectiener, echoing the other's word in a tone of still louder astonishment.

"Refuse four marks by the year!" said the one.

"Ale and beer—broth and nuton—cow's-grass and palfrey's!" shouted the Kitchener.

"Gown and galligaskins!" responded the Refectiener.

"A moment's patience, my brethren," answered the Sub-Prior, "and let us not be thus astonished before cause is afforded of our amazement. This good dame best knoweth the temper and spirit of her son—this much I can say, that it lieth not towards letters or learning, of which I have in vain endeavoured to instil into him some tincture. Nevertheless, he is a youth of no common spirit, but much like those (in my weak judgment) whom God raises up among a people when he meaneth that their deliverance shall be wrought out with strength of hand and valour of heart. Such men we have seen marked by a waywardness, and even an obstinacy of character, which hath appeared intractability and stupidity to those among whom they walked and were conversant, until the very opportunity hath arrived in which it was the will of Providence that they should be the fitting instrument of great things."

"Now, in good time hast thou spoken, Father Eustace," said the Abbot; "and we will see this swankie before we decide upon the means of employing him.—How say you, Sir Pierce Shafton, is it not the court fashion to suit the man to the office, and not the office to the man?"

"So please your reverence and lordship," answered the Northumbrian knight, "I do partly, that is, in some sort, subscribe to what your wisdom hath delivered.—Nevertheless, under reverence of the Sub-Prior, we do not look for gallant feats and national deliverers in the bosom of the green common people. Credit me, that if there

be some flashes of martial spirit about this young person, which I am not called upon to dispute, (though I have seldom seen that presumption and arrogance were made good upon the upshot by deed and action,) yet still these will prove insufficient to distinguish him, save in his own limited and lowly sphere—even as the glowworm, which makes a goodly show among the grass of the field, would be of little avail if deposited in a beacon-grate."

"Now, in good time," said the Sub-Prior, "and here comes the young huntsman to speak for himself;" for, being placed opposite to the window, he could observe Halbert as he ascended the little mound on which the tower was situated.

"Summon him to our presence," said the Lord Abbot; and with an obedient start the two attendant monks went off with emulous alertness. Dame Glendinning sprung away at the same moment, partly to gain an instant to recommend obedience to her son, partly to prevail with him to change his apparel before coming in presence of the Abbot. But the Kitchener and Refectiener, both speaking at once, had already seized each an arm, and were leading Halbert in triumph into the apartment, so that she could only ejaculate, "His will be done; but as he had but had on him his Sunday's hose!"

Limited and humble as this desire was, the fates did not grant it, for Halbert Glendinning was hurried into the presence of the Lord Abbot and his party without a word of explanation, and without a moment's time being allowed to assume his holiday hose, which, in the language of the time, implied both breeches and stockings.

Yet though thus suddenly presented amid the centre of all eyes, there was something in Halbert's appearance which commanded a certain degree of respect from the company into which he was so unceremoniously intruded, and the greater part of whom were disposed to consider him with hauteur if not with absolute contempt. But his appearance and reception we must devote to another chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

Now choose thee, gallant, betwixt wealth and honour;
There lies the path, in sun to bear thee through
The dance of youth, and the turmoil of manhood,
Yet leave enough for age's chimney-corner;
But an' thou grasp to it, farewell ambition!
Farewell each hope of bettering thy condition,
And raising thy low rank above the churls
That till the earth for bread.

Old Play.

It is necessary to dwell for some brief space on the appearance and demeanour of young Glendinning, ere we proceed to describe his interview with the Abbot of Saint Mary's, at this momentous crisis of his life.

Halbert was now about nineteen years old, tall and active rather than strong, yet of that hardy conformation of limb and show, which promises great strength when the growth shall be complete, and the system confirmed. He was perfectly well made, and like most men who have that advantage, possessed a grace and natural ease of manner and carriage, which prevented his being taken being the distinguished part of his external appearance. It was not until you had compared his stature with that of those amongst or near to whom

he stood, that you became sensible that the young Glendinning was upwards of six feet high. In the combination of unusual height with perfect symmetry, ease, and grace of carriage, the young heir of Glendearg, notwithstanding his rustic birth and education, had greatly the advantage even of Sir Pierce Shafton himself, whose stature was lower, and his limbs, though there was no particular point as object to, were on the whole less exactly proportioned. On the other hand, Sir Pierce's very handsome countenance afforded him as decided an advantage over the Scotsman, as regularity of features and brilliancy of complexion could give over traits which were rather strongly marked than beautiful, and upon whose complexion the "akey influences," to which he was constantly exposed, had blended the red and white into the purely nut-brown hue, which coloured alike cheeks, neck, and forehead, and blushed only in a darker glow upon the former. — Halbert's eyes supplied a marked and distinguished part of his physiognomy. They were large and of a hazel colour, and sparkled in moments of animation with such uncommon brilliancy, that it seemed as if they actually emitted light. Nature had closely curled the locks of dark-brown hair, which relieved and set off the features, such as we have described them, displaying a bold and animated disposition, much more than might have been expected from his situation, or from his previous manners, which hitherto had seemed bashful, homely, and awkward.

Halbert's dress was certainly not of that description which sets off to the best advantage a presence of itself prepossessing. His jerkin and hose were of coarse rustic cloth, and his cap of the same. A belt round his waist served at once to sustain the broadsword which we have already mentioned, and to hold five or six arrows and pike-bolts, which were stuck into it on the right side, along with a large knife hilted with buck-horn, or, as it was then called, a dudgeon-dagger. To complete his dress, we must notice his loose buskins of deer-hide, formed so as to draw up on the leg as high as the knee, or at pleasure to be thrust down lower than the calves. These were generally used at the period by such as either had their principal occupation, or their chief pleasure, in silvan sports, as they served to protect the legs against the rough and tangled thickets into which the pursuit of game frequently led them. — And these trifling particulars complete his external appearance.

It is not so easy to do justice to the manner in which young Glendinning's soul spoke through his eyes when unshorn so suddenly into the company of those whom his earliest education had taught him to treat with awe and reverence. The degree of embarrassment, which his demeanour evinced, had nothing in it either meanly servile, or utterly disconcerted. It was no more than became a generous and ingenuous youth of a bold spirit, but totally inexperienced, who should for the first time be called upon to think and act for himself in such society and under such disadvantageous circumstances. There was not in his carriage a grain either of forwardness or of timidity, which a friend could have wished away.

He lifted and kissed the Abbot's hand, then rose, and making two passes, bowed respectfully to the whole assembly, smiling gently as he received an encouraging nod from the Sub-Prior, to whom

alone he was personally known, and blushing as he encountered the anxious look of Mary Avenel, who beheld with painful interest the sort of ordeal to which her foster-brother was about to be subjected. Recovering from the transient flurry of spirits into which the encounter of her glance had thrown him, he stood composedly awaiting till the Abbot should express his pleasure.

The ingenuous expression of countenance, noble form, and graceful attitude of the young man, failed not to prepossess in his favour the churchmen in whose presence he stood. The Abbot looked round, and exchanged a gracious and approving glance with his counsellor Father Eustace, although probably the appointment of a ranger, or bow-bearer, was one in which he might have been disposed to proceed without the Sub-Prior's advice, were it but to shew his own free agency. But the good mien of the young man now in nomination was such, that he rather hastened to exchange congratulation on meeting with so proper a subject of promotion, than to indulge any other feeling. Father Eustace enjoyed the pleasure which a well-constituted mind derives from seeing a benefit light on a deserving object; for as he had not seen Halbert since circumstances had made so material a change in his manner and feelings, he scarce doubted that the proffered appointment would, notwithstanding his mother's uncertainty, suit the disposition of a youth who had appeared devoted to woodland sports, and a foe alike to sedentary or settled occupation of any kind. The Refectory and Kitchen were so well pleased with Halbert's prepossessing appearance, that they seemed to think that the salary, emoluments, and perquisites, the dole, the grasing, the gown, and the galligaskins, could scarce be better bestowed than on the active and graceful figure before them.

Sir Pierce Shafton, whether from being more deeply engaged in his own cogitations, or that the subject was unworthy of his notice, did not seem to partake of the general feeling of approbation excited by the young man's presence. He sat with his eyes half shut, and his arms folded, appearing to be wrapped in contemplations of a nature deeper than those arising out of the scene before him. But, notwithstanding his seeming abstraction and absence of mind, there was a flutter of vanity in Sir Pierce's very handsome countenance, an occasional change of posture from one striking attitude (or what he conceived to be such) to another, and an occasional stolen glance at the female part of the company, to spy how far he succeeded in riveting their attention, which gave a marked advantage, in comparison, to the less regular and more harsh features of Halbert Glendinning, with their composed, manly, and deliberate expression of mental fortitude.

Of the females belonging to the family of Glendearg, the Miller's daughter alone had her mind sufficiently at leisure to admire, from time to time, the graceful attitudes of Sir Pierce Shafton; for both Mary Avenel and Dame Glendinning were waiting in anxiety and apprehension the answer which Halbert was to return to the Abbot's proposal, and anxiously anticipating the consequences of his probable refusal. The conduct of his brother Edward, for a lad constitutionally shy, respectful, and even timid, was at once affectionate and noble. This younger son

of Dame Elspeth had stood unnoticed in a corner, after the Abbot, at the request of the Sub-Prior, had honoured him with some passing notice, and asked him a few commonplace questions about his progress in Donatus, and in the *Promptuarium Parvulorum*, without waiting for the answers. From his corner he now glided round to his brother's side, and keeping a little behind him, slid his right hand into the huntsman's left, and by a gentle pressure, which Halbert instantly and ardently returned, expressed at once his interest in his situation, and his resolution to share his fate.

The group was thus arranged, when, after the pause of two or three minutes, which he employed in slowly sipping his cup of wine, in order that he might enter on his proposal with due and deliberate dignity, the Abbot at length expressed himself thus:—

"My son—we your lawful Superior, and the Abbot, under God's favour, of the community of Saint Mary's, have heard of your manifold good gifts—a-hem—especially touching wood-craft—and the huntsman-like fashion in which you strike your game, truly and as a yeoman should, not abusing Heaven's good benefits by spoiling the flesh, as is too often seen in careless rangers—a-hem." He made here a pause, but observing that Glendinning only replied to his compliment by a bow, he proceeded,—"My son, we commend your modesty; nevertheless, we will that thou shouldst speak freely to us touching that which we have premeditated for thine advancement, meaning to confer on thee the office of bow-bearer and ranger, as well over the chases and forests wherein our house hath privilege by the gifts of pious kings and nobles, whose souls now enjoy the fruits of their bounties to the church, as to those which belong to us in exclusive right of property and perpetuity. Thy knee, my son—that we may, with our own hand, and without loss of time, induct thee into office."

"Kneel down," said the Kitchener on the one side; and "Kneel down," said the Refectory on the other.

But Halbert Glendinning remained standing.

"Were it to shew gratitude and good-will for your reverend lordship's noble offer, I could not," he said, "kneel low enough, or remain long enough kneeling. But I may not kneel to take investiture of your noble gift, my lord Abbot, being a man determined to seek my fortune otherwise."

"How is that, sir?" said the Abbot, knitting his brows; "do I hear you speak aright? and do you, a born vassal of the Halidome, at the moment when I am destining to you such a noble expression of my good-will, propose exchanging my service for that of any other?"

"My lord," said Halbert Glendinning, "it grieves me to think you hold me capable of undervaluing your gracious offer, or of exchanging your service for another. But your noble proffer doth but hasten the execution of a determination which I have long since formed."

"Ay, my son," said the Abbot, "is it indeed so?—right early have you learned to form resolutions without consulting those on whom you naturally depend. But what may it be, this sagacious resolution, if I may so far pray you?"

"To hold up to my brother and mother," answered Halbert, "mine interest in the fate of

Glendearg, lately possessed by my father, Simon Glendinning: and having prayed your lordship to be the same kind and generous master to them, that your predecessors, the venerable Abbots of Saint Mary's, have been to my fathers in time past; for myself, I am determined to seek my fortune where I may best find it."

Dame Glendinning here ventured, imboldened by maternal anxiety, to break silence with an exclamation of "O my son!" Edward, clinging to his brother's side, half spoke, half whispered, a similar ejaculation, of "Brother! brother!"

The Sub-Prior took up the matter in a tone of grave reprehension, which, as he conceived, the interest he had always taken in the family of Glendearg required at his hand.

"Willful young man," he said, "what folly can urge thee to push back the hand that is stretched out to aid thee! What visionary aim hast thou, before thee, that can compensate for the decay and sufficient independence which thou art now rejecting with scorn!"

"Four marks by the year, duly and truly," said the Kitchener.

"Cow's-grass, doublet, and galligaskins," responded the Refectory.

"Peace, my brethren," said the Sub-Prior; "and may it please your lordship, venerable father, upon my petition, to allow this headstrong youth a day for consideration, and it shall be my part so to indoctrinate him, as to convince him what is due on this occasion to your lordship, and to his family, and to himself."

"Your kindness, reverend father," said the youth, "craves my dearest thanks—it is the continuance of a long train of benevolence towards me, for which I give you my gratitude, for I have nothing else to offer. It is my mishap, not your fault, that your intentions have been frustrated. But my present resolution is fixed and unalterable. I cannot accept the generous offer of the Lord Abbot; my fate calls me elsewhere, to scenes where I shall end it or mend it."

"By our Lady," said the Abbot, "I think the youth be mad indeed—or that you, Sir Pierce, judged of him most truly, when you prophesied that he would prove unfit for the promotion we designed him—it may be you knew something of this wayward humour before!"

"By the mass, not I," answered Sir Pierce Shafton, with his usual indifference. "I but judged of him by his birth and breeding; for seldom doth a good hawk come out of a kite's egg."

"Thou art thyself a kite, and kestrel to boot," replied Halbert Glendinning, without a moment's hesitation.

"This in our presence, said to a man of worship!" said the Abbot, the blood rushing to his face.

"Yes, my lord," answered the youth; "even in your presence I return to this gay man's face, the careless dishonour which he has flung on my name. My brave father, who fell in the cause of his country, demands that justice at the hands of his son!"

"Unmannered boy!" said the Abbot.

"Nay, my good lord," said the knight, "praying pardon for the coarse interruption, let me suggest you notice be worth with this rustic!—From the north wind shall we soon puff one of your fellows from its perch, as swift which I have to do."

and inconsiderate as the churchish speech of an untaught churl, shall move the spleen of Pierce Shafton."

"Proud as you are, Sir Knight," said Halbert, "in your imagined superiority, be not too confident that you cannot be moved."

"Faith, by nothing that thou canst urge," said Sir Pierce.

"Knowest thou then this token?" said young Glendinning, offering to him the silver bodkin which he had received from the White Lady.

Never was such an instant change, from the most contemptuous serenity, to the most furious state of passion, as that which Sir Pierce Shafton exhibited. It was the difference between a cannon lying quiet in its embrasure, and the same gun when touched by the linstock. He started up, every limb quivering with rage, and his features so inflamed and agitated by passion, that he more resembled a demoniac, than a man under the regulation of reason. He clenched both his fists, and thrusting them forward, offered them furiously at the face of Glendinning, who was even himself startled at the frantic state of excitation which his action had occasioned. The next moment he withdrew them, struck his open palm against his own forehead, and rushed out of the room in a state of indescribable agitation. The whole matter had been so sudden, that no person present had time to interfere.

When Sir Pierce Shafton had left the apartment, there was a moment's pause of astonishment; and then a general demand that Halbert Glendinning should instantly explain by what means he had produced such a violent change in the deportment of the English cavalier.

"I did nought to him," answered Halbert Glendinning, "but what you all saw—I am I to answer for his fantastic freaks of humour?"

"Boy," said the Abbot, in his most authoritative manner, "these subterfuges shall not avail thee. This is not a man to be driven from his temperament without some sufficient cause. That cause was given by thee, and must have been known to thee. I command thee, as thou wilt save thyself from worse measure, to explain to me by what means thou hast moved our friend thus. We choose not that our vassals shall drive our guests mad in our very presence, and we remain ignorant of the means whereby that purpose is effected."

"So may it please your reverence, I did but shew him this token," said Halbert Glendinning, delivering it at the same time to the Abbot, who looked at it with much attention, and then, shaking his head, gravely delivered it to the Sub-Prior, without speaking a word.

Father Eustace looked at the mysterious token with some attention; and then addressing Halbert in a stern and severe voice, said, "Young man, if thou wouldst not have us suspect thee of some strange double-dealing in this matter, let us instantly know whence thou hadst this token, and how it possessed an influence on Sir Pierce Shafton?"—It would have been extremely difficult for Halbert, thus hard pressed, to have either evaded or answered so puzzling a question. To have avowed the truth might, in those times, have occasioned his being burnt at a stake, although, in our day, his confession would have only gained for him the credit of a liar beyond all national credibility. He was fortunately relieved by the return of Sir Pierce

Shafton himself, whose ear caught, as he entered, the sound of the Sub-Prior's question.

Without waiting until Halbert Glendinning replied, he came forward, whispering to him as he passed, "Be secret—thou shalt have the satisfaction thou hast dared to seek for."

When he returned to his place, there were still marks of discomposure on his brow; but, becoming apparently collected and calm, he looked around him, and apologized for the indecorum of which he had been guilty, which he ascribed to sudden and severe indisposition. All were silent, and looked on each other with some surprise.

The Lord Abbot gave orders for all to retire from the apartment, save himself, Sir Pierce Shafton, and the Sub-Prior. "And have an eye," he added, "on that bold youth, that he escape not; for if he hath practised by charm, or otherwise, on the health of our worshipful guest, I swear by the alb and mitre which I wear, that his punishment shall be most exemplary."

"My lord and venerable father," said Halbert, bowing respectfully, "fear not but that I will abide my doom. I think you will best learn from the worshipful knight himself, what is the cause of his distemperature, and how alight my share in it has been."

"Be assured," said the knight, without looking up, however, while he spoke, "I will satisfy the Lord Abbot."

With these words the company retired, and with them young Glendinning.

When the Abbot, the Sub-Prior, and the English knight were left alone, Father Eustace, contrary to his custom, could not help speaking the first. "Expeund unto us, noble sir," he said, "by what mysterious means the production of this simple toy could so far move your spirit, and overcome your patience, after you had shewn yourself proof to all the provocation offered by this self-sufficient and singular youth?"

The knight took the silver bodkin from the good father's hand, looked at it with great composure, and, having examined it all over, returned it to the Sub-Prior, saying at the same time, "In truth venerable father, I cannot but marvel, that the wisdom implied alike in your silver hairs, and in your eminent rank, should, like a babbling hound, (excuse the similitude,) open thus loudly on a false scent. I were, indeed, more slight to be moved than the leaves of the aspen-tree, which wag at the least breath of heaven, could I be touched by such a trifle as this, which in no way concerns me more than if the same quantity of silver were stricken into so many groats. Truth is, that from my youth upward, I have been subjected to such a malady as you saw me visited with even now—a cruel and searching pain, which goeth through nerve and bone, even as a good brand in the hands of a brave soldier sheers through limb and sinew—but it passes away speedily, as you yourselves may judge."

"Still," said the Sub-Prior, "this will not account for the youth offering to you this piece of silver, as a token by which you were to understand something, and, as we must needs conjecture, something disagreeable."

"Your reverence is in conjecture what you will," said Sir Pierce; "but I cannot pretend to lay your judgment on the right scent when I see it at sight."

I hope I am not liable to be called upon to account for the foolish actions of a malapert boy?"

"Assuredly," said the Sub-Prior, "we shall prosecute no inquiry which is disagreeable to our guest. Nevertheless," said he, looking to his Superior, "this chance may, in some sort, alter the plan your lordship had formed for your worshipful guest's residence for a brief term in this tower, as a place alike of secrecy and of security; both of which, in the terms which we now stand on with England, are circumstances to be desired."

"In truth," said the Abbot, "and the doubt is well thought on, were it as well removed; for I scarce know in the Halligome so fitting a place of refuge, yet see I not how to recommend it to our worshipful guest, considering the unrestrained petulance of this headstrong youth."

"Tush! reverend sire,—what would you make of me?" said Sir Piercie Shafton. "I protest, by mine honour, I would abide in this house were I to choose. What! I take no exceptions at the youth for shewing a flash of spirit, though the spark may light on mine own head. I honour the lad for it. I protest I will abide here, and he shall aid me in striking down a deer. I must needs be friends with him, as he be such a shot; and we will speedily send down to my lord Abbot a buck of the first head, killed so artificially as shall satisfy even the reverend Kitchener."

This was said with such apparent ease and good-humour, that the Abbot made no farther observation on what had passed, but proceeded to acquaint his guest with the details of furniture, hangings, provisions, and so forth, which he proposed to send up to the Tower of Glendearg for his accommodation. This discourse, seasoned with a cup or two of wine, served to prolong the time until the reverend Abbot ordered his cavalcade to prepare for their return to the Monastery.

"As we have," he said, "in the course of this our toilsome journey, lost our meridian, indulgence shall be given to those of our attendants who shall, from very weariness, be unable to attend the duty at prime," and this by way of misrecorder or indulgentia."

Having benevolently intimated a boon to his faithful followers, which he probably judged would be far from unacceptable, the good Abbot, seeing all ready for his journey, bestowed his blessing on the assembled household—gave his hand to be kissed by Dame Glendinning—himself kissed the cheek of Mary Avenel, and even of the Miller's maiden, when they approached to render him the same homage—commanded Halbert to rule his temper, and to be aiding and obedient in all things to the English knight—admonished Edward to be *discipulus impii etque strenuus*—then took a courteous farewell of Sir Piercie Shafton, advising him to lie close, for fear of the English borderers, who might be employed to kidnap him; and having discharged these various offices of courtesy, moved forth to the court-yard,

followed by the whole establishment. Here, with a heavy sigh approaching to a groan, the venerable father heaved himself upon his palfrey, whose dark purple housings swept the ground; and, greatly comforted that the discretion of the animal's pace would be no longer disturbed by the gambadoes of Sir Piercie and his prancing war-horse, he set forth at a sober and steady trot upon his return to the Monastery.

When the Sub-Prior had mounted to accompany his principal, his eye sought out Halbert, who, partly hidden by a projection of the outward wall of the court, stood apart from, and gazing upon the departing cavalcade, and the group which assembled around them. Unsatisfied with the explanation he had received concerning the mysterious transaction of the silver bodkin, yet interesting himself in the youth, of whose character he had formed a favourable idea, the worthy monk resolved to take an early opportunity of investigating that matter. In the meanwhile, he looked upon Halbert with a serious and warning aspect, and held up his finger to him as he signed farewell. He then joined the rest of the churchmen, and followed his Superior down the valley.

CHAPTER XX.

I hope you'll give me cause to think you noble,
And do me right with your sword, sir, as becomes
One gentleman of honour to another;
All this is fair, sir—let us make no days on't,
I'll lead your way.

Love's Pilgrimage.

THE look and sign of warning which the Sub-Prior gave to Halbert Glendinning as they parted, went to his heart; for although he had profited much less than Edward by the good man's instructions, he had a sincere reverence for his person; and even the short time he had for deliberation tended to shew him he was embarked in a perilous adventure. The nature of the provocation which he had given to Sir Piercie Shafton he could not even conjecture; but he saw that it was of a mortal quality, and he was now to abide the consequences.

That he might not force these consequences forward by any premature renewal of their quarrel, he resolved to walk apart for an hour, and consider on what terms he was to meet this haughty foreigner. The time seemed propitious for his doing so without having the appearance of wilfully shunning the stranger, as all the members of the little household were dispersing either to perform such tasks as had been interrupted by the arrival of the dignitaries, or to get in order what had been deranged by their visit.

Leaving the tower, therefore, and descending, unobserved as he thought, the knoll on which it stood, Halbert gained the little piece of level ground which extended between the descent of the hill, and the first sweep made by the brook after washing the foot of the eminence on which the tower was situated, where a few struggling birch and oak-trees served to secure him from observation. But scarcely had he reached the spot, when he was surprised to feel a smart tap upon the shoulder, and, turning around, he perceived he had been closely followed by Sir Piercie Shafton.

1. The hour of repose at noon, which, in the middle ages, was employed in slumber, and which the monastic rules of the time rendered necessary.

2. The midnight service of the monks.

3. *Discipulus impii*, according to the learned work of Pambrooke on the subject, signifies, meant not only an indulgence, or remission of some particular duties, but also a particular appointment to a service, where the monks continued to enjoy such indulgences as were granted beyond the rule.

When, whether from our state of animal spirits, want of confidence in the justice of our cause, or any other motive, our own courage happens to be in a wavering condition, nothing tends so much altogether to disconcert us, as a great appearance of promptitude on the part of our antagonist. Halbert Glendinning, both morally and constitutionally intrepid, was nevertheless somewhat troubled at seeing the stranger, whose resentment he had provoked, appear at once before him, and with an aspect which boded hostility. But though his heart might beat somewhat thicker, he was too high-spirited to exhibit any external signs of emotion.

"What is your pleasure, Sir Pierre?" he said to the English knight, enduring without apparent discomposure all the terrors which his antagonist had summoned into his aspect.

"What is thy pleasure?" answered Sir Pierre; "a goodly question after the part you have acted towards me!—Young man, I know not what infatuation has led thee to place thyself in direct and insolent opposition to one who is a guest of thy liege-lord the Abbot, and who, even from the courtesy due to thy mother's roof, had a right to remain there without meeting insult. Neither do I ask, or care, by what means thou hast become possessed of the fatal secret by which thou hast dared to offer me open shame. But I must now tell thee, that the possession of it hath cost thee thy life."

"Not, I trust, if my hand and sword can defend it," replied Halbert, boldly.

"True," said the Englishman, "I mean not to deprive thee of thy fair chance of self-defence. I am only sorry to think, that, young and country-bred as thou art, it can but little avail thee. But thou must be well aware, that in this quarrel I shall use no terms of quarter."

"Rely on it, proud man," answered the youth, "that I shall ask none; and although thou speakest as if I lay already at thy feet, trust me, that as I am determined never to ask thy mercy, so I am not fearful of needing it."

"Thou wilt, then," said the knight, "do nothing to avert the certain fate which thou hast provoked with such wantonness?"

"And how were that to be purchased?" replied Halbert Glendinning, more with the wish of obtaining some farther insight into the terms on which he stood with this stranger, than to make him the submission which he might require.

"Explain to me instantly," said Sir Pierre, "without equivocation or delay, by what means thou wert enabled to wound my honour so deeply—and shouldst thou point out to me by so doing an enemy more worthy of my resentment, I will permit thine own obscure insignificance to draw a veil over thine insolence."

"This is too high a flight," said Glendinning, fiercely, "for thine own presumption to soar without being checked. Thou hast come to my father's house, as well as I can guess, a fugitive and an exile, and thy first greeting to its inhabitants has been that of contempt and injury. By what means I have been able to retort that contempt, let thine own conscience tell thee. Enough for me that I stand on the privilege of a free Scotchman, and will brook no insult unreturned, and no injury unrequited."

"It is well, then," said Sir Pierre Shafton,

"we will dispute this matter to-morrow morning with our swords. Let the time be daybreak, and do thou assign the place. We will go forth as if to strike a deer."

"Content," replied Halbert Glendinning; "I will guide thee to a spot where an hundred men might fight and fall without any chance of interruption."

"It is well," answered Sir Pierre Shafton.

"Here then we part.—Many will say, that in thus indulging the right of a gentleman to the son of a clod-breaking peasant, I derogate from my sphere, even as the blessed man would derogate should he condescend to compare and match his golden beams with the twinkle of a pale, blinking, expiring, gross-fed taper. But no consideration of rank shall prevent my avenging the insult thou hast offered me. We bear a smooth face, observe me, Sir Villagio, before the worshipful inmates of yonder cabin, and to-morrow we try conclusions with our swords." So saying, he turned away towards the tower.

It may not be unworthy of notice, that in the last speech only, had Sir Pierre used some of those flowers of rhetoric which characterized the usual style of his conversation. Apparently, a sense of wounded honour, and the deep desire of vindicating his injured feelings, had proved too strong for the fantastic affectation of his acquired habits. Indeed, such is usually the influence of energy of mind, when called forth and exerted, that Sir Pierre Shafton had never appeared in the eyes of his youthful antagonist half so much deserving of enmity and respect as in this brief dialogue, by which they exchanged mutual defiance. As he followed him slowly to the tower, he could not help thinking to himself, that, had the English knight always displayed this superior tone of bearing and feeling, he would not probably have felt so earnestly disposed to take offence at his hand. Mortal offence, however, had been exchanged, and the matter was to be put to mortal arbitrament.

The family met at the evening meal, when Sir Pierre Shafton extended the benignity of his countenance and the graces of his conversation far more generally over the party than he had hitherto condescended to do. The greater part of his attention was, of course, still engrossed by his divine and inimitable Discretion, as he chose so term Mary Avenel; but, nevertheless, there were interjectional flourishes to the Maid of the Mill, under the title of Comely Damsel, and to the Dame, under that of Worshy Matron. Nay, lest he should fail to excite their admiration by the graces of his rhetoric, he generously, and without solicitation, added those of his voice; and after regretting bitterly the absence of his viol-da-gamba, he regaled them with a song, "which," said he, "the inimitable Astrophel, whom mortals call Philip Sidney, composed in the songs of his muse, to show the world what they are to expect from his riper years, and which will one day see the light in that not-to-be-parallelled perfection of human wit, which he has addressed to his sister, the matchless Parthenope, whom men call Countess of Pembroke; a work," he continued, "whereof his friendship hath permitted me, though unworthy, to be an occasional partaker, and whereof I may well say, that the deep afflative tale which swells our spheres, is so enriched with brilliant singu-

tudes, dulcet descriptions, pleasant poems, and engaging interludes, that they seem as the stars of the firmament, beautifying the dusky robe of night. And though I wot well how much the lovely and quaint language will suffer by my widowed voice, widowed in that it is no longer matched by my beloved viol-de-gamba, I will essay to give you a taste of the ravishing sweetness of the poetry of the un-to-be-imitated *Astrophel*."

So saying, he sung without mercy or remorse about five hundred verses, of which the two first and the four last may suffice for a specimen —

What tongue cancher perfections tell,
On whose each part all pens may dwell.

Of whose high praise and praiseful bias;
Goodness the pen, Heaven paper is;
The ink immortal fame doth send,
And I began so I must end.

As Sir Pierce Shafton always sung with his eyes half shut, it was not until, agreeably to the promise of poetry, he had fairly made an end, that looking round, he discovered that the greater part of his audience had, in the meanwhile, yielded to the charms of repose. Mary Avenel, indeed, from a natural sense of politeness, had contrived to keep awake through all the prolixities of the divine *Astrophel*; but Mysie was transported in dreams back to the dusty atmosphere of her father's mill. Edward himself, who had given his attention for some time, had at length fallen fast asleep; and the good dame's nose, could its tones have been put under regulation, might have supplied the bass of the lamented viol-de-gamba. Halbert, however, who had no temptation to give way to the charms of slumber, remained awake with his eyes fixed on the songster; not that he was better entertained with the words, or more ravished with the execution, than the rest of the company, but rather because he admired, or perhaps envied, the composure, which could thus spend the evening in interminable madrigals, when the next morning was to be devoted to deadly combat. Yet it struck his natural acuteness of observation, that the eye of the gallant cavalier did now and then, furtively as it were, seek a glance of his countenance, as to discover how he was taking the exhibition of his antagonist's composure and serenity of mind.

He shall read nothing in my countenance, thought Halbert, proudly, that can make him think my indifference less than his own.

And taking from the shelf a bag full of miscellaneous matters collected for the purpose, he began with great industry to dress hooks, and had finished half-a-dozen of flies (we are enabled, for the benefit of those who admire the antiquities of the gentle art of angling, to state that they were brown hackles) by the time that Sir Pierce had arrived at the conclusion of his long-winded strophes of the divine *Astrophel*. So that he also testified a magnanimous contempt of that which to-morrow should bring forth.

As it now waxed late, the family of Glendearg separated for the evening; Sir Pierce first saying to the dame that "her son Albert —"

"Halbert," said Elspeth, with emphasis. "Halbert, after his goodnight, Halbert Brydone."

"Well, then, I have prayed your son, Halbert, that we may arrive to-morrow, with the sun's splendour, to wake a stag from his lair, that I may

see whether he be as prompt at that sport as fame bespeaks him."

"Alas! sir," answered Dame Elspeth, "he is but too prompt, in you talk of promptitude, at any thing that has steel at one end of it, and mischief at the other. But he is at your honourable disposal, and I trust you will teach him how obedience is due to our venerable father and lord, the Abbot, and prevail with him to take the bow-bearer's place in fee; for, as the two worthy monks said, it will be a great help to a widow-woman."

"Trust me, good dame," replied Sir Pierce, "it is my purpose so to indoctrinate him, touching his conduct and bearing towards his betters, that he shall not lightly depart from the reverence due to them. — We meet, then, beneath the birch-trees in the plain," he said, looking to Halbert, "so soon as the eye of day hath opened its lids." Halbert answered with a sign of acquiescence, and the knight proceeded, "And now, having wished to my fairest Discretion those pleasant dreams which wave their pinions around the couch of sleeping beauty, and to this comely damsel the boonties of Morpheus, and, to all others the common good-night, I will crave you leave to depart to my place of rest, though I may any with the poet,

'Ah rest! — no rest but change of place and posture:
Ah sleep! — no sleep but worn-out Nature's swooning;
Ah bed! — no bed but cushion fill'd with stones;
Rest, sleep, nor bed, await not on an exile.'"

With a delicate obeisance he left the room, evading Dame Glendinning, who hastened to assure him he would find his accommodations for repose much more agreeable than they had been the night before, there having been store of warm coverlets, and a soft feather-bed, sent up from the Abbey. But the good knight probably thought that the grace and effect of his exit would be diminished, if he were recalled from his heroics to discuss such sublimary and domestic topics, and therefore hastened away without waiting to hear her out.

"A pleasant gentleman," said Dame Glendinning; "but I will warrant him an humorous! — And sings a sweet song, though it is somewhat of the longest. — Well, I make mine avow he is goodly company — I wonder when he will go away."

Having thus expressed her respect for her guest, not without intimation that she was heartily tired of his company, the good dame gave the signal for the family to disperse, and laid her injunctions on Halbert to attend Sir Pierce Shafton at daybreak, as he required.

When stretched on his pallet by his brother's side, Halbert had no small cause to envy the sound sleep which instantly settled on the eyes of Edward, but refused him any share of its influence. He saw now too well what the spirit had darkly indicated, that, in granting the boon which he had asked so unadvisedly, she had contributed more to his harm than his good. He was now sensible, too late, of the various dangers and inconveniences with which his dearest friends were threatened, alike by his disfigurement or his success in the

1. *Humorous* — full of whims — thus, *humorous* — "humorous as wheat" — The vulgar word *humorous* often is used to the meaning.

approaching duel. If he fell, he might say personally, "good-night all." But it was not the less certain that he should leave a dreadful legacy of distress and embarrassment to his mother and family,—an anticipation which by no means tended to render the front of death, in itself a grisly object, more agreeable to his imagination. The vengeance of the Abbot, his conscience told him, was sure to descend on his mother and brother, or could only be averted by the generosity of the victor—And Mary Arvenel—he should have shewn himself, if he succumbed in the present combat, as inefficient in protecting her, as he had been unnecessarily active in bringing disaster on her, and on the house in which she had been protected from infancy. And to this view of the case were to be added all those imbibed and anxious feelings with which the bravest men, even in a better or less doubtful quarrel, regard the issue of a dubious combat, the first time when it has been their fate to engage in an affair of that nature.

But however disconsolate the prospect seemed in the event of his being conquered, Halbert could expect from victory little more than the safety of his own life, and the gratification of his wounded pride. To his friends—to his mother and brother—especially to Mary Arvenel—the consequences of his triumph would be more certain destruction than the contingency of his defeat and death. If the English knight survived, he might in courtesy extend his protection to them; but if he fell, nothing was likely to screen them from the vindictive measures which the Abbot and convent would surely adopt against the violation of the peace of the Halidome, and the slaughter of a protected guest by one of their own vassals, within whose house they had lodged him for shelter. These thoughts, in which neither view of the case augured aught short of ruin to his family, and that ruin entirely brought on by his own rashness, were thorns in Halbert Glendinning's pillow, and deprived his soul of peace and his eyes of slumber.

There appeared no middle course, saving one which was marked by degradation, and which, even if he stooped to it, was by no means free of danger. He might indeed confess to the English knight the strange circumstances which led to his presenting him with that token which the White Lady (in her displeasure as it now seemed) had given him, that he might offer it to Sir Piercie Shafton. But to this avowal his pride could not stoop, and Penson, who is wonderfully ready to be of counsel with pride on such occasions, offered many arguments to shew it would be useless as well as mean so far to degrade himself. "If I tell tales so wonderful," thought he, "shall I not either be stigmatized as a liar, or punished as a wizard?—Were Sir Piercie Shafton generous, noble, and benevolent, as the champions of whom we hear in romance, I might indeed gain his ear, and, without demeaning myself, escape from the situation in which I am placed. But as he is, or at least seems to be, self-conceited, arrogant, vain, and presumptuous—I should but humble myself in vain—and I will not humble myself!" he said, starting out of bed, grasping to his broadsword, and brandishing it in the light of the moon, which streamed through the deep niche that served them as a window; when, to his extreme surprise and terror, an airy form stood at the moonlight, but intercepted not the reflection on the floor.

Dimly as it was expressed, the sound of the voice soon made him sensible he saw the White Lady.

At no time had her presence seemed so terrific to him; for when he had invoked her, it was with the expectation of the apparition, and the determination to abide the issue. But now she had come unalled, and her presence impressed him with a sense of approaching misfortune, and with the hideous apprehension that he had associated himself with a demon, over whose motions he had no control, and of whose powers and quality he had no certain knowledge. He remained, therefore, in more terror, gazing on the apparition, which chanted or recited in cadence the following lines—

"He whose heart for vengeance ached,
Must not shrink from shedding blood;
The knot that thou hast tied with word,
Thou must loose by edge of sword."

"Avant thee, false Spirit!" said Halbert Glendinning; "I have bought thy advice too dearly already—Begone in the name of God!"

The Spirit laughed; and the cold unnatural sound of her laughter had something in it more fearful than the usual melancholy tones of her voice. She then replied,—

"You have summon'd me once—you have summon'd me twice,
And without me a summons I come to you thrice,
Unask'd for, unask'd for, you came to my glen;
Unask'd and unask'd I am with you again."

Halbert Glendinning gave way for a moment to terror, and called on his brother, "Edward! waken, waken, for Our Lady's sake!"

Edward awoke accordingly, and asked what he wanted.

"Look out," said Halbert, "look up! seest thou no one in the room?"

"No, upon my good word," said Edward, looking out.

"What! seest thou nothing in the moonshine upon the floor there?"

"No, nothing," answered Edward, "save thyself resting on thy naked sword. I tell thee, Halbert, thou shouldst trust more to thy spiritual arms, and less to those of steel and iron. For this many a night hast thou started and moaned, and cried out of fighting, and of apocrypha, and of goblins—thy sleep hath not refreshed thee—thy waking hath been a dream.—Credit me, dear Halbert, say the *Pater* and *Credo*, resign thyself to the protection of God, and thou wilt sleep sound and wake in comfort."

"It may be," said Halbert slowly, and having his eye still bent on the female form which to him seemed distinctly visible,— "it may be—But tell me, dear Edward, seest thou no one on the chamber floor but me?"

"No one," answered Edward, raising himself on his elbow; "dear brother, lay aside thy weapon, say thy prayers, and lay thee down to rest."

While he thus spoke, the Spirit smiled at Halbert as if in scorn; her wan cheek faded in the wan moonlight even before the smile had passed away, and Halbert himself no longer beheld the vision to which he had so anxiously solicited his brother's attention. "May God preserve my wife!" he said, as, lying aside his weapon, he again threw himself on his bed.

"Answer I my dearest brother," answered Edward, "but we must not provoke that Heaven in our wantonness which we invoke in our misery.—He

not angry with me, my dear brother — I know not why you have totally of late estranged yourself from me — It is true, I am neither so athletic in body, nor so alert in courage, as you have been from your infancy; yet, till lately, you have not absolutely cast off my society — Believe me, I have wept in secret, though I forbore to intrude myself on your privacy. The time has been when you held me not so cheap; and when, if I could not follow the game so closely, or make it so truly as you, I could fill up our intervals of pastime with pleasant tales of the olden times, which I had read or heard, and which excited even your attention as we sat and eat our provision by some pleasant spring — but now I have, though I know not why, lost thy regard and affection. — Nay, toss not thy arms about thee thus wildly," said the younger brother; "from thy strange dreams, I fear some touch of fever hath affected thy blood — let me draw closer around thee thy mantle."

"Forbear," said Halbert — "your care is needless — your complaints are without reason — your fears on my account are in vain."

"Nay, but hear me, brother," said Edward. "Your speech in sleep, and now even your waking dreams, are of things which belong not to this world, but to our race — Our good Father Eustace says, that howbeit we may not do well to receive all idle tales of goblins and spectres, yet there is warrant from holy Scripture to believe, that the fiends haunt waste and solitary places; and that those who frequent such wildernesses alone, are the prey, or the sport, of these wandering demons. And therefore, I pray thee, brother, let me go with you when you go next up the glen, where, as you well know, there be places of evil reputation — Thouarest not for my escort; but, Halbert, such dangers are more safely encountered by the wise in judgment, than by the bold in bosom; and though I have small cause to boast of my own wisdom, yet I have that which ariseth from the written knowledge of elder times."

There was a moment during this discourse, when Halbert had well-nigh come to the resolution of disburdening his own breast, by intrusting Edward with all that weighed upon it. But when his brother reminded him that this was the morning of a high holiday, and that, setting aside all other business or pleasure, he ought to go to the Monastery and shrive himself before Father Eustace, who would that day occupy the confessional, pride stepped in and confirmed his wavering resolution. "I will not avow," he thought, "a tale so extraordinary, that I may be considered as an impostor or something worse — I will not fly from this Englishman, whose arm and sword may be no better than my own. My father have faced his betters, were he as much distinguished in battle as he is by his quaint discourse."

Pride, which has been said to save man, and woman too, from falling, has yet a stronger influence on the mind when it embraces the cause of passion, and seldom fails to render it victorious over conscience and reason. Halbert, once determined, though not to the better course, at length slept soundly, and was only awakened by the dawn of day.

CHAPTER XXI.

*Indifferent, but indifferent — palaw, he doth it not
Like one who is his craft's master — as for the law
I have seen a clown under a bloody coronet
On one who was a master of defence.*

Old Play

With the first gray peep of dawn, Halbert Glen-dinning arose and hastened to dress himself, girded on his weapon, and took a cross-bow in his hand, as if his usual sport had been his sole object. He groped his way down the dark and winding staircase, and undid with as little noise as possible, the fastenings of the inner door, and of the exterior iron grate. At length he stood free in the courtyard, and looking up to the tower, saw a signal made with a handkerchief from the window. Nothing doubting that it was his antagonist, he passed expecting him. But it was Mary Arden, who glided like a spirit from under the low and rugged portal.

Halbert was much surprised, and felt, he knew not why, like one caught in the act of a meditated trespass. The presence of Mary Arden had till that moment never given him pain. She spoke, too, in a tone where sorrow seemed to mingle with reproach, while she asked him with emphasis, "What he was about to do?"

He showed his cross-bow, and was about to express the pretext he had meditated, when Mary interrupted him.

"Not so, Halbert — that evasion were unworthy of one whose word has hitherto been truth. You meditate not the destruction of the deer — your hand and your heart are aimed at other game — you seek to do battle with this stranger."

"And wherefore should I quarrel with our guest?" answered Halbert, blushing deeply.

"There are, indeed, many reasons why you should not," replied the maiden, "nor is there one of avari wherefore you should — yet nevertheless, such a quarrel you are now searching after."

"Why should you suppose so, Mary?" said Halbert, endeavouring to hide his conscious purpose — "he is my mother's guest — he is protected by the Abbot and the community, who are our masters — he is of high degree also, — and wherefore should you think that I can, or dare, resent a hasty word, which he has perchance thrown out against me more from the wantonness of his wit, than the purpose of his heart?"

"Alas!" answered the maiden, "the very asking that question puts your resolution beyond a doubt. Since your childhood you were ever daring, seeking danger rather than avoiding it — delighting in whatever had the air of adventure and of courage; and it is not from fear that you will now blush from your purpose — Oh, let it then be from pity! — from pity, Halbert, to your aged mother, whose your death or victory will alike deprive of the comfort and stay of her age."

"She has my brother Edward," said Halbert, turning suddenly from her.

"She has indeed," said Mary Arden, "the calm, the noble-minded, the conscientious Edward, who has thy courage, Halbert, without thy fiery notions, — thy generous spirit, with more of reason to guide it. He would not have heard his mother, he would not have heard his adopted sister, he would

him in vain not to ruin himself, and tear up their future hopes of happiness and protection."

Halbert's heart swelled as he replied to this reproach. "Well — what avails it speaking! — you have him that is better than me — wiser, more considerate — braver, for aught I know — you are provided with a protector, and need care no more for me."

Again he turned to depart, but Mary Avenel laid her hand on his arm so gently that he scarce felt her hold, yet felt that it was impossible for him to strike it off. There he stood, one foot advanced to leave the court-yard, but so little determined on departure, that he resembled a traveller arrested by the spell of a magician, and unable either to quit the attitude of motion, or to proceed on his course.

Mary Avenel availed herself of his state of suspense. "Hear me," she said, "hear me, Halbert! — I am an orphan, and even Heaven hears the orphan — I have been the companion of your infancy, and if you will not hear me for an instant, from whom may Mary Avenel claim so poor a boon?"

"I hear you," said Halbert Glendinning, "but be brief, dear Mary — you mistake the nature of my business — it is but a morning of summer sport which we propose."

"Say not thus," said the maiden, interrupting him, "say not thus to me — others thou mayest deceive, but me thou canst not — There has been that in me from the earliest youth, which fraud flies from, and which imposture cannot deceive. For what fate has given me such a power I know not; but bred an ignorant maiden, in this sequestered valley, mine eyes can too often see what man would most willingly hide — I can judge of the dark purposes, though it is hid under the smiling brow, and a glance of the eye says more to me than oaths and protestations do to others."

"Then," said Halbert, "if thou canst so read the human heart, — say, dear Mary — what dost thou see in mine! — tell me that — say that what thou seest — what thou readest in this bosom, does not offend thee — say but that, and thou shalt be the guide of my actions, and mould me now and henceforward to honour or to dishonour at thy own free will!"

Mary Avenel became first red, and then deadly pale, as Halbert Glendinning spoke. But when, turning round at the close of his address, he took her hand, she gently withdrew it, and replied, "I cannot read the heart, Halbert, and I would not of my will know aught of yours, save what becomes us both — I only can judge of signs, words, and actions of little outward import, more truly than shoes around me, as my eyes, thou knowest, have seen objects not presumed to those of others."

"Let them gaze then on one whom they shall never see more," said Halbert, once more turning from her, and rushing out of the court-yard without again looking back.

Mary Avenel gave a faint scream, and clasped both her hands firmly on her forehead and eyes. She had been a minute in this attitude, when she was thus greeted by a voice from behind: "Generously done, my most eloquent Discretion, to hide those brilliant eyes from the far inferior beams which even now begin to gild the eastern horizon — Darest thou there were that Phœbus, outdone in splendour, might in very shamefacedness turn

back his eye, and rather leave this world in darkness, than incur the disgrace of such an encounter — Credit me, lovely Discretion —"

But as Sir Piercie Shafton (the reader will readily set down these flowers of eloquence to the proper owner) attempted to take Mary Avenel's hand, in order to proceed in his speech, she shook him abruptly off, and regarding him with an eye which braved terror and agitation, rushed past him into the tower.

The knight stood looking after her with a countenance in which contempt was strongly mingled with mortification. "By my knighthood!" he ejaculated, "I have thrown away upon this rude rustic Phideia a speech, which the predest beauty at the court of Felicia (so let me call the Elysium from which I am banished!) might have termed the very matins of Cupid. Hard and inexorable was the fate that sent thee thither, Piercie Shafton, to waste thy wit upon country wenches, and thy valour upon hob-nailed clowns! But that insult — that affront — had it been offered to me by the lowest plebeian, he must have died for it by my hand, in respect the enormity of the offence doth counteravail the inequality of him by whom it is given. I trust I shall find this clownish roisterer not less willing to deal in blows than in taunts."

While he held this conversation with himself, Sir Piercie Shafton was hastening to the little tuft of birch-trees which had been assigned as the place of meeting. He greeted his antagonist with a courtly salutation, followed by this commentary: "I pray you to observe, that I doff my hat to you, though so much my inferior in rank, without derogation on my part, inasmuch as my having so far honoured you in receiving and admitting your defiance, doth, in the judgment of the best martialists, in some sort and for the time, raise you to a level with me — an honour which you may and ought to account cheaply purchased, even with the loss of your life, if such should chance to be the issue of this duello."

"For which condescension," said Halbert, "I have to thank the token which I presented to you."

The knight changed colour, and grinded his teeth with rage — "Draw your weapon!" said he to Glendinning.

"Not in this spot," answered the youth; "we should be liable to interruption — Follow me, and I will bring you to a place where we shall encounter no such risk."

He proceeded to walk up the glen, resolving that their place of combat should be in the entrance of the Corri-nan-shian; both because the spot, lying under the reputation of being haunted, was very little frequented, and also because he regarded it as a place which to him might be termed fitted, and which he therefore resolved should witness his death or victory.

They walked up the glen for some time in silence, like honourable enemies who did not wish to contend with words, and who had nothing friendly to exchange with each other. Silence, however, was always an unknown state with Sir Piercie, and moreover, his anger was usually a hasty and short-lived passion. As, therefore, he went forth, in his own idea, in all love and honour towards his antagonist, he saw not any cause for submitting longer to the painful restraint of positive silence.

He began by complimenting Halbert on the alert activity with which he surmounted the obstacles and impediments of the way.

"Trust me," said he, "worthy rustic, we have not a lighter or a firmer step in our courtlike revels, and if duly set forth by a silk hose, and trained unto that stately exercise, your leg would make an indifferent good show in a pavin or a galliard. And I doubt nothing," he added, "that you have availed yourself of some opportunity to improve yourself in the art of fence, which is more akin than dancing to our present purpose."

"I know nothing more of fencing," said Halbert, "than hath been taught me by an old shepherd of ours, called Martin, and at whiles a lesson from Christie of the Clinthill—for the rest, I must trust to good sword, strong arm, and sound heart."

"Marry and I am glad of it, young Audacity, (I will call you my Audacity, and you will call me your Condescension, while we are on these terms of unnatural equality.) I am glad of your ignorance with all my heart. For we martialists proportion the punishments which we inflict upon our opposites, to the length and hazard of the efforts wherewith they oppose themselves to us. And I see not why you, being but a tyro, may not be held sufficiently punished for your outrecuidance, and orgillous presumption, by the loss of an ear, an eye, or even a finger, accompanied by some flesh-wound of depth and severity, suited to your error—whereas, had you been able to stand more effectually on your defence, I see not how less than your life could have atoned sufficiently for your presumption."

"Now, by God and Our Lady," said Halbert, "unable any longer to restrain himself, 'thou art thyself over presumptuous, who speakest thus daringly of the issue of a combat which is not yet even begun—Are you a god, that you already dispose of my life and limbs? or are you a judge in the justice-air, telling at your ease and without risk, how the head and quarters of a condemned criminal are to be disposed of?'"

"Not an, O thou, whom I have well permitted to call thyself my Audacity! I, thy Condescension, am neither a god to judge the issue of the combat before it is fought, nor a judge to dispose at my ease and in safety of the limbs and head of a condemned criminal; but I am an indifferent good master of fence, being the first pupil of the first master of the first school of fence that our royal England affords, the said master being no other than the truly noble, and all-unutterably-skilful Vincentio Saviola, from whom I learned the firm step, quick eye, and nimble hand—of which qualities thou, O my most rustical Audacity, art full like to reap the fruits so soon as we shall find a piece of ground fitting for such experiments."

They had now reached the gorge of the ravine, where Halbert had at first intended to stop; but when he observed the narrowness of the level ground, he began to consider that it was only by superior agility that he could expect to make up his deficiency in the science, as it was called, of defence. He found no spot which afforded sufficient room to traverse for this purpose, until he gained the well-known fountain, by whose margin, and in front of the huge rock from which it sprung, was an amphitheatre of level turf, of small space indeed, compared with the great height of the cliffs with which it was surrounded on every point save that from

which the rivulet issued forth, yet large enough for their present purpose.

When they had reached this spot of ground, fitted well by its gloom and sequestered situation to be a scene of mortal strife, both were surprised to observe that a grave was dug close by the foot of the rock with great neatness and regularity, the green turf being laid down upon the one side, and the earth thrown out in a heap upon the other. A mattock and shovel lay by the verge of the grave.

Sir Pierce Shafton bent his eye with unusual seriousness upon Halbert Glendinning, as he asked him sternly, "Does this bode treason, young man? And have you purpose to set upon me here as in an emboscade or place of vantage?"

"Not on my part, by Heaven!" answered the youth: "I told no one of our purpose, nor would I for the throne of Scotland take odds against a single arm."

"I believe thou wouldst not, mine Audacity," said the knight, resuming the affected manner which was become a second nature to him; "nevertheless this fosse is curiously well shaped, and might be the masterpiece of Nature's last bed-maker, I would say the sexton—Wherefore, let us be thankful to chance or some unknown friend, who hath thus provided for one of us the decencies of sepulture, and let us proceed to determine which shall have the advantage of enjoying this place of undisturbed slumber."

So saying, he stripped off his doublet and cloak, which he folded up with great care, and deposited upon a large stone, while Halbert Glendinning, not without some emotion, followed his example. Their vicinity to the favourite haunt of the White Lady led him to form conjectures concerning the incident of the grave—"It must have been her work!" he thought: "the Spirit foresaw and has provided for the fatal event of the combat—I must return from this place a homicide, or I must remain here for ever!"

The bridge seemed now broken down behind him, and the chance of coming off honourably without killing or being killed, (the hope of which issue has cheered the sinking heart of many a duellist,) seemed now altogether to be removed. Yet the very desperation of his situation gave him, on an instant's reflection, both firmness and courage, and presented to him one sole alternative, conquest, namely, or death.

"As we are here," said Sir Pierce Shafton, "unaccompanied by any patrons or seconds, it were well you should pass your hands over my side, as I shall over yours; not that I suspect you to use any quaint device of privy armour, but in order to comply with the ancient and laudable custom practised on all such occasions."

While, complying with his antagonist's humour, Halbert Glendinning went through this ceremony, Sir Pierce Shafton did not fail to solicit his attention to the quality and fineness of his wrought and embroidered shirt—"In this very shirt," said he, "O mine Audacity!—I am in this very garment, in which I am now to combat a Scottish rustic like thyself, it was my envied lot to lead the winning party at that venous match at ballou, which bewit the divine Anstruther, (our master of the law,) and the right honourable my very good lord of Oxford. All the beauties of Flanders (by which

man I distinguish our beloved England) stood in the gallery, waving their kerchiefs at each turn of the game, and cheering the winners by their plaudits. After which noble sport we were refreshed by a suitable banquet, whereto it pleased the noble Urania (being the unmatched Countess of Pembroke) to accommodate me with her fan for the cooling my somewhat too much inflamed visage, to requite which courtesy, I said, casting my features into a smiling yet melancholy fashion, O divinest Urania ! receive again that too fatal gift, which not like the Zephyr cooleth, but like the hot breath of the Sirocco, heateth yet more that which is already inflamed. Whereupon, looking upon me somewhat scornfully, yet not so but what the experienced courtier might perceive a certain cast of approbative affection —

Here the knight was interrupted by Halbert, who had waited with courteous patience for some little time, till he found, that far from drawing to a close, Sir Pierce seemed rather inclined to wax prolix in his reminiscences.

"Sir Knight," said the youth, "if this matter be not very much to the purpose, we will, if you object not, proceed to that which we have in hand. You should have abidden in England had you desired to waste time in words, for here we spend it in blows."

"I crave your pardon, most rusticated Audacity," answered Sir Pierce; "truly I become oblivious of every thing beside, when the recollections of the divine court of Felicia press upon my wakened memory, even as a saint is dazzled when he be-thinks him of the beatific vision. Ah, felicitous Felician! delicate nurse of the fair, chosen abode of the wise, the birth-place and cradle of nobility, the temple of courtesy, the fane of sprightly chivalry — Ah heavenly court, or rather courtly heaven! cheered with dances, lulled asleep with harmony, awakened with sprightly sports and tourneys, decorated with silks and tissues, glittering with diamonds and jewels, standing on end with double piled velvets, satins, and satinets!"

"The token, Sir Knight, the token!" exclaimed Halbert Glendinning, who, impatient of Sir Pierce's interminable oratory, reminded him of the ground of their quarrel, as the best way to compel him to the purpose of their meeting.

And he judged right; for Sir Pierce Shafton no sooner heard him speak, than he exclaimed, "Thy death-hour has struck — betake thee to thy sword — *Via!*"

Both swords were unsheathed, and the combats commenced their engagement. Halbert became immediately aware, that, as he had expected, he was far inferior to his adversary in the use of his weapon. Sir Pierce Shafton had taken no more than his own share of real merit, when he termed himself an absolutely good fencer; and Glendinning soon found that he should have great difficulty in coping with life and honour from such a master of the sword. The English knight was master of all the mystery of the *stoccata*, *ambroscata*, *punto-reverso*, *incertata*, and so forth, which the Italian masters of defence had lately introduced into general practice. But Glendinning, on his part, was no novice in the principles of the art, according to the old Scottish fashion, and possessed the spirit of all genuine, steady and collected mind. At first, being desirous to try the skill, and be-

come acquainted with the play of his enemy, he stood on his defence, keeping his foot, hand, eye, and body, in perfect unison, and holding his sword short, and with the point towards his antagonist's face, so that Sir Pierce, in order to assail him, was obliged to make actual passes, and could not avail himself of his skill in making feints; while, on the other hand, Halbert was prompt to parry these attacks, either by shifting his ground, or with the sword. The consequence was, that, after two or three sharp attempts on the part of Sir Pierce, which were evaded or disconcerted by the address of his opponent, he began to assume the defensive in his turn, fearful of giving some advantage by being repeatedly the assailant. But Halbert was too cautious to press on a swordsman whose dexterity had already more than once placed him within a hair's-breadth of death, which he had only escaped by uncommon watchfulness and agility.

When each had made a feint or two, there was a pause in the conflict, both as if by one assent dropping their swords' point, and looking on each other for a moment without speaking. At length Halbert Glendinning, who felt perhaps more uneasy on account of his family than he had done before he had displayed his own courage, and proved the strength of his antagonist, could not help saying, "Is the subject of our quarrel, Sir Knight, so mortal, that one of our two bodies must needs fill up that grave? or may we with honour, having proved ourselves against each other, sheathe our swords and depart friends?"

"Valiant and most rustical Audacity," said the Southron knight, "to no man on earth could you have put a question on the code of honour, who was more capable of rendering you a reason. Let us pause for the space of one venue, until I give you my opinion on this dependance; for certain it is, that brave men should not run upon their fate like brute and furious wild beasts, but should slay each other deliberately, decently, and with reason. Therefore, if we coolly examine the state of our dependance, we may the better apprehend whether the sisters three have doomed one of us to expiate the same with his blood — Dost thou understand me?"

"I have heard Father Eustace," said Halbert, after a moment's recollection, "speak of the three furies, with their thread and their shears."

"Enough — enough," — interrupted Sir Pierce Shafton, crimsoning with a new fit of rage, "the thread of thy life is spun!"

And with these words he attacked with the utmost ferocity the Scottish youth, who had but just time to throw himself into a posture of defence. But the rash fury of the assailant, as frequently happens, disappointed its own purpose; for, as he made a desperate thrust, Halbert Glendinning avoided it, and ere the knight could recover his weapon, requited him (to use his own language) with a resolute *stoccata*, which, passing through his body, and Sir Pierce Shafton fell to the ground.

¹ Dependance — A phrase among the brethren of the sword for an existing quarrel.

CHAPTER XXII.

Yes, life hath left him — every busy thought,
Each fiery passion, every strong affection,
All sense of outward ill and inward sorrow,
Are fled at once from the pale trunk before me;
And I have given that which spoke and moved,
Thought, action, suffer'd as a living man,
To be a ghastly form of bloody clay,
Soon the foul food for reptiles.

Old Play.

I BELIEVE few successful duellists (if the word successful can be applied to a superiority so fatal) have beheld their dead antagonist stretched on the earth at their feet, without wishing they could redeem with their own blood that which it has been their fate to spill. Least of all could such indifference be the lot of so young a man as Halbert Glendinning, who, unused to the sight of human blood, was not only struck with sorrow, but with terror, when he beheld Sir Pierce Shafton lie stretched on the green-sward before him, vomiting gore as if impelled by the strokes of a pump. He threw his bloody sword on the ground, and hastened to kneel down and support him, vainly striving, at the same time, to stanch his wound, which seemed rather to bleed inwardly than externally.

The unfortunate knight spoke at intervals, when the syncope would permit him, and his words, so far as intelligible, partook of his affected and encoined, yet not ungenerous character.

"Most rustical youth," he said, "thy fortune hath prevailed over knightly skill — and Audacity hath overcome Condescension, even as the kite hath sometimes hawked at and struck down the falcon-gentle. — Fly and save thyself! — Take my purse — it is in the nether pocket of my carnation-coloured hose — and is worth a clown's acceptance. See that my mails, with my vestments, be sent to the Monastery of St Mary's" — (here his voice grew weak, and his mind and recollection seemed to waver) — "I bestow the out velvet jerkin, with close breeches conforming — for — oh! — the good of my soul."

"Be of good comfort, sir," said Halbert, half-distracted with his agony of pity and remorse. "I trust you shall yet do well — Oh for a leech!"

"Were there twenty physicians, O most generous Audacity, and that were a grave spectacle — I might not survive, my life is ebbing fast. — Commend me to the rustical nymph whom I called my Discretion — O Claridiana! — true empress of this bleeding heart — which now bleedeth in sad earnest! — Place me on the ground at my length, most rustical victor, born to quench the pride of the burning light of the most felicitous court of Follies — O omits and angus — knights and ladies — masques and theatres — quaint devices — chain-work and brocade — love, honour, and beauty! —"

While muttering these last words, which slid from him, as it were unawares, while doubtless he was recalling to mind the glories of the English court, the gallant Sir Pierce Shafton stretched out his limbs — groaned deeply, shut his eyes, and became motionless.

Halbert tore his hair for very sorrow, as he looked on the pale countenance of his victim. Life, he thought, had not utterly fled, but without better

aid than his own, he saw not how it could be preserved.

"Why," he exclaimed, in vain penitence, "why did I provoke him to an issue so fatal! Would to God I had submitted to the worst insult man could receive from man, rather than be the bloody instrument of this bloody deed — and doubly cursed be this evil-boding spot, which, haunted as I knew it to be by a witch or a devil, I yet chose for the place of combat! In any other place, save this, there had been help to be gotten by speed of foot, or by uplifting of voice — but here there is no one to be found by search, no one to hear my shouts, save the evil spirit who has counselled this mischief. It is not her hour — I will essay the spell howsoever; and if she can give me aid, she shall do it, or know of what a madman in capable even against those of another world!"

He spurned his bloody shoe from his foot, and repeated the spell with which the reader is well acquainted; but there was neither voice, apparition, nor signal of answer. The youth, in the impatience of his despair, and with the rash-hardihood which formed the basis of his character, shouted aloud, "Witch — Sorceress — Fiend! — art thou deaf to my cries of help, and so ready to appear and answer those of vengeance! Arise and speak to me, or I will choke up thy fountain, tear down thy hollybush, and leave thy haunt as waste and bare as thy fatal assistance has made me waste of comfort and bare of counsel!" — This furious and saving invocation was suddenly interrupted by a distant sound, resembling a hallo, from the gorge of the ravine. "Now may Saint Mary be praised," said the youth, hastily fastening his sandal, "I hear the voice of some living man, who may give me counsel and help in this fearful extremity."

Having donned his sandal, Halbert Glendinning, hallooing at intervals, in answer to the sound which he had heard, ran with the speed of a hunted buck down the rugged delf, as if paradise had been before him, hell and all her furies behind, and his eternal happiness or misery had depended upon the speed which he exerted. In a space incredibly short for any one but a Scottish mountaineer having his nerves strung by the deepest and most passionate interest, the youth reached the entrance of the ravine, through which the rill that flows down Corri-nan-shian discharges itself, and unites with the brook that waters the little valley of Glendearg.

Here he paused, and looked around him upwards and downwards through the glen, without perceiving a human form. His heart sank within him. But the windings of the glen intercepted his prospect, and the person, whose voice he had heard, might therefore, be at no great distance, though not obvious to his sight. The branches of an oak-tree, which shot straight out from the face of a tall cliff, proffered to his bold spirit, steady head, and active limbs, the means of ascending it as a place of out-look, although the enterprise was what most men would have shrunk from. But by out-bound from the earth, the active youth caught hold of the lower branch, and swung himself up into the tree, and in a minute more gained the top of the cliff, from which he could easily survey a human figure descending the valley. It was not that of a shepherd, or of a hunter, and scarcely any others used to traverse this deserted solitude,

especially coming from the north, since the reader may remember that the brook took its rise from an extensive and dangerous morass which lay in that direction.

But Halbert Glendinning did not pause to consider who the traveller might be, or what might be the purpose of his journey. To know that he saw a human being, and might receive, in the extremity of his distress, the countenance and advice of a fellow-creature, was enough for him at the moment. He threw himself from the pinnacle of the cliff once more into the arms of the projecting oak-tree, whose boughs waved in middle air, anchored by the roots in a huge gulf, or chasm of the rock. Catching at the branch which was nearest to him, he dropped himself from that height upon the ground; and such was the athletic springiness of his youthful sinews, that he pitched there as lightly, and with as little injury, as the falcon stooping from her wheel.

To resume his race at full speed up the glen, was the work of an instant; and as he turned angle after angle of the indented banks of the valley, without meeting that which he sought, he became half afraid that the form which he had seen at such a distance had already melted into thin air, and was either a deception of his own imagination, or of the elementary spirits by which the valley was supposed to be haunted.

But, to his inexpressible joy, as he turned round the base of a huge and distinguished crag, he saw, straight before and very near to him, a person, whose dress, as he viewed it hastily, resembled that of a pilgrim.

He was a man in advanced life, and wearing a long beard, having on his head a large slouched hat, without either band or brooch. His dress was a tunic of black serge, which like those commonly called lussar-cloaks, had an upper part, which covered the arms and fell down on the lower; a small scrip and bottle, which hung at his back, with a stout staff in his hand, completed his equipage. His step was feeble, like that of one exhausted by a toilsome journey.

"Save ye, good father!" said the youth. "God and Our Lady have sent you to my assistance."

"And for what, my son, can so frail a creature as I am, be of service to you?" said the old man, not a little surprised at being thus accosted by so handsome a youth, his features discomposed by anxiety, his face flushed with exertion, his hands and much of his dress stained with blood.

"A man bleeds to death in the valley here, hard by. Come with me—come with me! You are aged—you have experience—you have at least your senses—and mine have well-nigh left me."

"A man—and bleeding to death—and here in this desolate spot!" said the stranger.

"Stay not to question it, father," said the youth, "but come instantly to my rescue. Follow me—follow me, without an instant's delay."

"Nay, but my son," said the old man, "we do not lightly follow the guides who present themselves thus suddenly in the bosom of a howling wilderness. Ere I follow thee, thou must expound to me thy name, thy purpose, and thy cause."

"There is no time to expound any thing," said Halbert; "I tell thee a man's life is at stake, and thou must come to aid him, or I will carry thee thither by force!"

"Nay, thou shalt not need," said the traveller; "if it indeed be as thou sayest, I will follow thee of free-will—the rather that I am not wholly unskilled in leech-craft, and have in my scrip that which may do thy friend a service—Yet walk more slowly, I pray thee, for I am already well-nigh foreworn with travel."

With the indignant impatience of the fiery steed when compelled by his rider to keep pace with some slow drudge upon the highway, Halbert accompanied the wayfarer, burning with anxiety which he endeavoured to subdue, that he might not alarm his companion, who was obviously afraid to trust him. When they reached the place where they were to turn off the wider glen into the Corri, the traveller made a doubtful pause, as if unwilling to leave the broader path—"Young man," he said, "if thou meanest aught—but good to these gray hairs, thou wilt gain little by thy cruelty—I have no earthly treasure to tempt either robber or murderer."

"And I," said the youth, "am neither—and yet—God of Heaven!—I may be a murderer, unless your aid comes in time to this wounded wretch!"

"Is it even so," said the traveller; "and do human passions disturb the breast of nature even in her deepest solitude!—Yet why should I marvel that where darkness abides the works of darkness should abound!—By its fruits in the tree known—Lead on, unhappy youth—I follow thee!"

And with better will to the journey than he had evinced hitherto, the stranger exerted himself to the uttermost, and seemed to forget his own fatigue in his efforts to keep pace with his impatient guide.

What was the surprise of Halbert Glendinning, when, upon arriving at the fatal spot, he saw no appearance of the body of Sir Pierce Shaffron! The traces of the fray were otherwise sufficiently visible. The knight's cloak had indeed vanished as well as his body, but his doubt remained where he had laid it down, and the turf on which he had been stretched was stained with blood in many a dark crimson spot.

As he gazed round him in terror and astonishment, Halbert's eyes fell upon the place of sepulchre which had so lately appeared to gape for a victim. It was no longer open, and it seemed that earth had received the expected tenant; for the usual narrow hillock was piled over what had lately been an open grave, and the green sod was adjusted over all with the accuracy of an experienced sexton. Halbert stood aghast. The idea rushed on his mind irresistibly, that the earth-heap before him enclosed what had lately been a living, moving, and sentient fellow-creature, whom, on little provocation, his fell act had reduced to a clod of the valley, as senseless and as cold as the turf under which he rested. The hand that scooped the grave had completed its work; and whose hand could it be save that of the mysterious being of doubtful quality, whom his rashness had invoked, and whom he had suffered to intermingle in his destinies!

As he stood with clasped hands and uplifted eyes, bitterly ruing his rashness, he was roused by the voice of the stranger, whose suspicions of his guide had again been awakened by finding the scene so different from what Halbert had led him to expect—"Young man," he said, "hast thou baited thy tongue with falsehood to ent perhaps

only a few days from the life of one whom Nature will soon call home, without guilt on thy part to hasten his journey?"

"By the blessed Heaven!—by our dear Lady!" ejaculated Halbert—

"Swear not at all!" said the stranger, interrupting him, "neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne, nor by earth, for it is his footstool—nor by the creatures whom he hath made, for they are but earth and clay as we are. If thy yea be yea, and thy nay nay. Tell me in a word, why and for what purpose thou hast feigned a tale, to lead a bewildered traveller yet farther astray?"

"As I am a Christian man," said Glendinning, "I left him here bleeding to death—and now I no where spy him, and much I doubt that the tomb that thou seest has closed on his mortal remains!"

"And who is he for whose fate thou art so anxious?" said the stranger; "or how is it possible that this wounded man could have been either removed from, or interred in, a place so solitary?"

"His name," said Halbert, after a moment's pause, "is Pierce Shafton—there, on that very spot, I left him bleeding; and what power has conveyed him hence, I know no more than thou dost."

"Pierce Shafton!" said the stranger; "Sir Pierce Shafton of Wilverton, a kinsman, as it is said, of the great Pierce of Northumberland! If thou hast slain him, to return to the territories of the proud Abbot is to give thy neck to the gallows. He is well known that Pierce Shafton; the meddling tool of wiser plotters—a harebrained trafficker in treason—a champion of the Pope, employed as a forlorn hope by those more politic heads, who have more will to work mischief, than valour to encounter danger.—Come with me, youth, and save thyself from the evil consequences of this deed—Guide me to the Castle of Avenel, and thy reward shall be protection and safety."

Again Halbert paused, and summoned his mind to a hasty council. The vengeance with which the Abbot was likely to visit the slaughter of Shafton, his friend, and in some measure his guest, was likely to be severe; yet, in the various contingencies which he had considered previous to their duel, he had unaccountably omitted to reflect what was to be his line of conduct in case of Sir Pierce falling by his hand. If he returned to Glendearg, he was sure to draw on his whole family, including Mary Avenel, the resentment of the Abbot and community, whereas it was possible that flight might make him be regarded as the sole author of the deed, and might avert the indignation of the monks from the rest of the inhabitants of his paternal tower. Halbert recollected also the favour expressed for the household, and especially for Edward, by the Sub-Prior; and he conceived that he could, by communicating his own guilt to that worthy ecclesiastic, when at a distance from Glendearg, secure his powerful interposition in favour of his family. These thoughts rapidly passed through his mind, and he determined on flight. The stranger's company and his promised protection came in aid of that resolution; but he was unable to reconcile the invitation which the old man gave him to accompany him for safety to the Castle of Avenel, with the connections of Julian, the present usurper of that inheritance. "Good Heaven," he said, "I fear that you mistake the man with whom you wish me to harbour: Avenel

guided Pierce Shafton into Scotland, and his henchman, Christie of the Clinthill, brought the Southron hither."

"Of that," said the old man, "I am well aware. Yet if thou wilt trust to me, as I have shewn no reluctance to confide in thee, thou shalt find with Julian Avenel welcome, or at least safety."

"Father," replied Halbert, "though I can ill reconcile what thou sayest with what Julian Avenel hath done, yet caring little about the safety of a creature so lost as myself, and as thy words seem those of truth and honesty, and finally, as thou didst render thyself frankly up to my conduct I will return the confidence thou hast shewn, and accompany thee to the Castle of Avenel by a road which thou thyself couldst never have discovered." He led the way, and the old man followed for some time in silence.

CHAPTER XXIII.

'Tis when the wound is stiffening with the cold,
The warrior feels his pain—'tis when the heat
And fiery fever of his soul is pass'd,
The sinner feels remorse.

Old Play.

THE feelings of compunction with which Halbert Glendinning was visited upon this painful occasion, were deeper than belonged to an age and country in which human life was held so cheap. They fell far short certainly of those which might have afflicted a mind regulated by better religious precepts, and more strictly trained under social laws; but still they were deep and severely felt, and divided in Halbert's heart even the regret with which he parted from Mary Avenel and the tower of his fathers.

The old traveller walked silently by his side for some time, and then addressed him.—"My son, it has been said that sorrow must speak or die—Why art thou so much cast down?—Tell me thy unhappy tale, and it may be that my gray head may devise counsel and aid for your young life."

"Alas!" said Halbert Glendinning, "can you wonder why I am cast down?—I am at this instant, a fugitive from my father's house, from my mother, and from my friends, and I bear on my head the blood of a man who injured me but in idle words, which I have thus bloodily requited. My heart now tells me I have done evil—it was harder than these rocks if it could bear unmoved the thought, that I have sent this man to a long account, unhoused and unshriven!"

"Pause there, my son," said the traveller. "That thou hast defaced God's image in thy neighbour's person—that thou hast sent dust to dust in the wrath or idler pride, is indeed a sin of the deepest dye—that thou hast cut short the space which Heaven might have allowed him for repentance, makes it yet more deadly—but for all this there is balm in Gilead."

"I understand you not, Father," said Halbert, struck by the solemn tone, which was assumed by his companion.

The old man proceeded.—"Thou hast slain thine enemy—it was a cruel deed; thou hast cut him off purchase in his sin—it is a fearful aggravation,

Do yet by my counsel, and in lieu of him whom thou hast perchance consigned to the kingdom of Satan, let thine efforts wrest another subject from the reign of the Evil One."

"I understand you, father," said Halbert; "thou wouldst have me atone for my rashness by doing service to the soul of my adversary—But how may this be? I have no money to purchase masses, and gladly would I go barefoot to the Holy Land to free his spirit from purgatory, only that——"

"My son," said the old man, interrupting him, "the sinner for whose redemption I entreat you to labour, is not the dead, but the living. It is not for the soul of thine enemy I would exhort thee to pray—that has already had its final doom from a Judge as merciful as he is just; nor, wert thou to coin that rock into ducats, and obtain a mass for each one, would it avail the departed spirit. Where the tree hath fallen, it must lie. But the sapling, which hath in it yet the vigour and juice of life, may be bended to the point to which it ought to incline."

"Art thou a priest, father?" said the young man, "or by what commission dost thou talk of such high matters?"

"By that of my Almighty Master," said the traveller, "under whose banner I am an enlisted soldier."

Halbert's acquaintance with religious matters was no deeper than could be derived from the Archbishop of Saint Andrew's Catechism, and the pamphlet called the Two-pennie Faith, both which were industriously circulated and recommended by the monks of Saint Mary's. Yet, however indifferent and superficial a theologian, he began to suspect that he was now in company with one of the gossellers, or heretics, before whose influence the ancient system of religion now tottered to the very foundation. Bred up, as may well be presumed, in a holy horror against these formidable sectaries, the youth's first feelings were those of a loyal and devoted church vassal. "Old man," he said, "wert thou able to make good with thy hand the words that thy tongue hath spoken against our Holy Mother Church, we should have tried upon this moor which of our creeds hath the better champion."

"Nay," said the stranger, "if thou art a true soldier of Rome, thou wilt not pause from thy purpose because thou hast the odds of years and of strength on thy side. Hearken to me, my son. I have shewed thee how to make thy peace with Heaven, and thou hast rejected my proffer. I will now shew thee how thou shalt make thy reconciliation with the powers of this world. Take this gray hair from the frail body which supports it, and carry it to the chair of proud Abbot Boniface; and when thou talkest him thou hast slain Percie Shafton, and he is as dead as the dead, lay the head of Henry Warden at his feet, and thou shalt have praise instead of censure."

Halbert Glendinning stepped back in surprise. "What! are you that Henry Warden so famous among the heretics, that even Knox's name is scarce more frequently in their mouths? Art thou he, and darest thou to approach the Hall-dome of Saint Mary's?"

"I am Henry Warden of a surety," said the old man, "but unworthy to be named in the same

breath with Knox, but yet willing to venture on whatever dangers my master's service may call me to."

"Hearken to me, then," said Halbert; "to slay thee, I have no heart—to make thee prisoner, were equally to bring thy blood on my head—to leave thee in this wild without a guide, were little better. I will conduct thee, as I promised, in safety to the Castle of Avenel; but breathe not, while we are on the journey, a word against the doctrines of the holy church of which I am an unworthy—but though an ignorant, a zealous member.—When thou art there arrived, beware of thyself—there is a high price upon thy head, and Julian Avenel loves the glance of gold better than pieces."

"Yet thou sayest not," answered the Protestant preacher, for such he was, "that for lucre he would sell the blood of his guest?"

"Not if thou comest an invited stranger, relying on his faith," said the youth; "evil as Julian may be, he dare not break the rites of hospitality; for, loose as we on these marches may be in all other ties, these are respected amongst us even to idolatry, and his nearest relations would think it incumbent on them to spill his blood themselves, to efface the disgrace such treason would bring upon their name and lineage. But if thou goest self-invited, and without assurance of safety, I promise thee thy risk is great."

"I am in God's hand," answered the preacher; "it is on His errand that I traverse these wilds amidst dangers of every kind; while I am useful for my master's service, they shall not prevail against me, and when, like the barren fig-tree, I can no longer produce fruit, what imports it when or by whom the axe is laid to the root?"

"Your courage and devotion," said Glendinning, "are worthy of a better cause."

"That," said Warden, "cannot be—guine is the very best."

They continued their journey in silence, Halbert Glendinning tracing with the utmost accuracy the mazes of the dangerous and intricate morasses and hills which divided the Halldome from the barony of Avenel. From time to time he was obliged to stop, in order to assist his companion to cross the black intervals of quaking bog, called in the Scottish dialect *aga*, by which the firmer parts of the morass were intersected.

"Courage, old man," said Halbert, as he saw his companion almost exhausted with fatigue, "we shall soon be upon hard ground. And yet soft as this moss is, I have seen the merry falconers go through it as light as deer when the quarry was upon the flight."

"True, my son," answered Warden, "for so I will still call you, though you term me no longer father; and even so doth headlong youth pursue its pleasures, without regard to the mire and the peril of the paths through which they are hurried."

"I have already told thee," answered Halbert Glendinning, sternly, "that I will hear nothing from thee that savours of doctrine."

"Nay, but, my son," answered Warden, "thy spiritual father himself would surely not dispute

¹ A gold coin of James V., the most beautiful of the Scottish series, so called because the effigies of the sovereign is represented wearing a bonnet.

the truth of what I have now spoken for your edification!"

Glendinning stoutly replied, "I know not how that may be—but I wot well it is the fashion of your brotherhood to bait your hook with fair discourse, and to hold yourselves up as angels of light, that you may the better extend the kingdom of darkness."

"May God," replied the preacher, "pardon those who have thus reported of his servants! I will not offend thee, my son, by being instant out of season—thou speakest but as thou art taught—yet sure I trust that so goodly a youth will be still rescued, like a brand from the burning."

While he thus spoke, the verge of the moraines was attained, and their path lay on the declivity. Green-sward it was, and, viewed from a distance, chequered with its narrow and verdant line the dark-brown heath, which it traversed, though the distinction was not so easily traced when they were walking on it. The old man pursued his journey with comparative ease; and, unwilling again to awaken the jealous zeal of his young companion for the Roman faith, he discoursed on other matters. The tone of his conversation was still grave, moral, and instructive. He had travelled much, and knew both the language and manners of other countries, concerning which Halbert Glendinning, already anticipating the possibility of being obliged to quit Scotland for the deed he had done, was naturally and anxiously desirous of information. By degrees he was more attracted by the charms of the stranger's conversation than repelled by the dread of his dangerous character as a heretic, and Halbert had called him father more than once, ere the turrets of Avenel Castle came in view.

The situation of this ancient fortress was remarkable. It occupied a small rocky islet in a mountain lake, or *loch*, as such a piece of water is called in Westmoreland. The lake might be about a mile in circumference, surrounded by hills of considerable height, which, except where old trees and brushwood occupied the ravines that divided them from each other, were bare and heathy. The surprise of the spectator was chiefly excited by finding a piece of water situated in that high and mountainous region, and the landscape around had features which might rather be termed wild, than either romantic or sublime; yet the scene was not without its charms. Under the burning sun of summer, the clear azure of the deep unuffled lake refreshed the eye, and impressed the mind with a pleasing feeling of deep solitude. In winter, when the snow lay on the mountains around, these dazzling masses appeared to ascend far beyond their wonted and natural height, while the lake, which stretched beneath, and filled their bosom with all its frozen waves, lay like the surface of a darkened and broken mirror around the black and rocky islet, and the walls of the gray castle with which it was crowned.

As the castle occupied, either with its principal buildings, or with its flanking and outward walls, every projecting point of rock, which served as its site, it seemed as completely surrounded by water as the nest of a wild swan, save where a

narrow causeway extended betwixt the islet and the shore. But the fortress was larger in appearance than in reality; and of the buildings which it actually contained, many had become ruinous and uninhabitable. In the times of the grandeur of the Avenel family, these had been occupied by a considerable garrison of followers and retainers; but they were now in a great measure deserted; and Julian Avenel would probably have fixed his habitation in a residence better suited to his diminished fortunes, had it not been for the great security which the situation of the old castle afforded to a man of his precarious and perilous mode of life. Indeed, in this respect, the spot could scarce have been more happily chosen, for it could be rendered almost completely inaccessible at the pleasure of the inhabitant. The distance betwixt the nearest shore and the islet was not indeed above an hundred yards; but then the causeway which connected them was extremely narrow, and completely divided by two cuts, one in the mid-way between the islet and shore, and another close under the outward gate of the castle. These formed a formidable, and almost insurmountable interruption to any facile approach. Each was defended by a drawbridge, one of which, being that nearest to the castle, was regularly raised at all times during the day, and both were lifted at night.

The situation of Julian Avenel, engaged in a variety of feuds, and a party to almost every dark and mysterious transaction which was on foot in that wild and military frontier, required all these precautions for his security. His own ambiguous and doubtful course of policy had increased these dangers; for as he made professions to both parties in the state, and occasionally united more actively with either the one or the other, as chance best to serve his immediate purpose, he could not be said to have either firm allies and protectors, or determined enemies. His life was a life of expedients and of peril; and while, in pursuit of his interest, he made all the doubles which he thought necessary to attain his object, he often overran his prey, and missed that which he might have gained by observing a straighter course.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"I'll walk on tiptoe; and my eye with caution,
My heart with courage, and my hand with weapon,
Like him who ventures on a lion's den."

Old Play.

WHEN, issuing from the gorge of a pass which terminated upon the lake, the travellers came in sight of the ancient castle of Avenel, the old man paused, and, resting upon his pilgrim staff, looked with earnest attention upon the scene before him. The castle was, as we have said, in many places ruinous, as was evident, even at this distance, by the broken, rugged, and irregular outline of the walls and of the towers. In others it seemed more entire, and a pillar of dark smoke, which ascended from the chimneys of the donjon, and spread in long dusky pendants through the clear ether, indicated that it was inhabited. But as

* The path, visible when looked at from a distance, but not so when you are upon it, is called in the North the *signing*; a name of a high-road.

corn-fields or enclosed pasture-grounds on the side of the lake showed that provident attention to comfort and subsistence which usually appeared near the houses of the greater, and even of the lesser barons. There were no cottages with their patches of infield, and their crofts and gardens, surrounded by rows of massive sycamores; no church with its simple tower in the valley; no herds of sheep among the hills; no cattle on the lower ground; nothing which intimated the occasional prosecution of the arts of peace and of industry. It was plain that the inhabitants, whether few or numerous, must be considered as the garrison of the castle, living within its defended precincts, and subsisting by means which were other than peaceful.

Probably it was with this conviction that the old man, gazing on the castle, muttered to himself, "*Lapis offensivus et petra scandali!*" and then, turning to Halbert Glendinning, he added, "We may say of yonder fort as King James did of another fastness in this province, that he who built it was a thief in his heart."

"But it was not so," answered Glendinning; "yonder castle was built by the old lords of Avenel, men as much beloved in peace as they were respected in war. They were the bulwark of the frontiers against foreigners, and the protectors of the natives from domestic oppression. The present usurper of their inheritance no more resembles them, than the night-prowling owl resembles a falcon, because she builds on the same rock."

"This Julian Avenel, then, holds no high place in the love and regard of his neighbours?" said Warden.

"So little," answered Halbert, "that besides the jack-men and riders with whom he has associated himself, and of whom he has many at his disposal, I know of few who voluntarily associate with him. He has been more than once outlawed both by England and Scotland, his lands declared forfeited, and his head set at a price. But in these unquiet times, a man so daring as Julian Avenel has ever found some friends willing to protect him against the penalties of the law, on condition of his secret services."

"You describe a dangerous man," replied Warden.

"You may have experience of that," replied the youth, "if you deal not the more warily;—though it may be that he also has forsaken the community of the church, and gone astray in the path of heresy."

"What your blindness terms the path of heresy," answered the reformer, "is indeed the strait and narrow way, wherein he who walks turns not aside, whether for worldly wealth or for worldly passions. Would to God this man were moved by no other and no worse spirit than that which prompts my poor endeavours to extend the kingdom of Heaven! This Baron of Avenel is personally unknown to me, is not of our congregation or of our council; yet I hear so him charges touching my safety, from those whom he must fear if he does not respect them, and upon that assurance I will venture upon his hold.—I am now sufficiently refreshed by these few minutes of repose."

"Take then this advice for your safety," said

Halbert, "and believe that it is founded upon the usage of this country and its inhabitants. If you can better shift for yourself, go not to the Castle of Avenel—if you do risk going thither, obtain from him, if possible, his safe-conduct, and beware that he swears it by the Black Rood.—And lastly, observe whether he eats with you at the board, or pledges you in the cup; for if he gives you not these signs of welcome, his thoughts are evil towards you."

"Alas!" said the preacher, "I have no better earthly refuge for the present than these frowning towers, but I go thither trusting to aid which is not of this earth.—But thou, good youth; needest thou trust thyself in this dangerous den?"

"I," answered Halbert, "am in no danger. I am well known to Christie of the Clinthill, the henchman of this Julian Avenel; and, what is a yet better protection, I have nothing either to provoke malice or to tempt plunder."

The tramp of a steed, which clattered along the shingly banks of the loch, was now heard behind them; and, when they looked back, a rider was visible, his steel cap and the point of his long lance glancing in the setting sun, as he rode rapidly towards them.

Halbert Glendinning soon recognized Christie of the Clinthill, and made his companion aware that the henchman of Julian Avenel was approaching.

"Ha, youngling!" said Christie to Halbert; as he came up to them, "thou hast made good my word at last, and come to take service with my noble master, hast thou not? Thou shalt find a good friend and a true; and ere Saint Barnaby come round again, thou shalt know every pass betwixt Millburn Plain and Notherby, as if thou hadst been born with a jack on thy back, and a lance in thy hand.—What old carle hast thou with thee?—He is not of the brotherhood of Saint Mary's—at least he has not the braid* of these black cattle."

"He is a wayfaring man," said Halbert, "who has concerns with Julian of Avenel. For myself, I intend to go to Edinburgh to see the court and the Queen, and when I return hither we will talk of your proffer. Meantime, as thou hast often invited me to the castle, I crave hospitality there to-night for myself and my companion."

"For thyself and welcome, young comrade," replied Christie; "but we harbour no pilgrims, nor aught that looks like a pilgrim."

"So please you," said Warden, "I have letters of commendation to thy master from a sure friend, whom he will right willingly oblige in higher matters than in affording you a brief protection.—And I am no pilgrim, but renounces the same, with all its superstitious observances."

He offered his letters to the horseman, who shook his head.

"These," he said, "are matters for my master, and it will be well, if he can read them himself for me, sword and lance are my stock and pander, and have been since I was twelve years old. But I will guide you to the castle, and the Baron of Avenel will himself judge of your errand."

By this time the party had reached the caseway, along which Christie advanced at a trot, intimating,

* It was of Lochwood, the hereditary fortress of the Johnstones of Annandale, a strong castle situated in the centre of a wooded bog, that James VI. made this remark.

* Braid.—The head, or mane, set upon sheep or cattle by their owners.

his presence to the warders within the castle by a shrill and peculiar whistle. At this signal the farther drawbridge was lowered. The horseman passed it, and disappeared under the gloomy portal which was beyond it.

Glendinning and his companion advancing more leisurely along the rugged causeway, stood at length under the same gateway, over which frowned, in dark red freestone, the ancient armorial bearings of the house of Avenel, which represented a female figure shrouded and muffled, which occupied the whole field. The cause of their assuming so singular a device was uncertain, but the figure was generally supposed to represent the mysterious being called the White Lady of Avenel. The sight of this mouldering shield awakened in the mind of Halbert the strange circumstances which had connected his fate with that of Mary Avenel, and with the doings of the spiritual being who was attached to her house, and whom he saw here represented in stone, as he had before seen her effigy upon the seal ring of Walter Avenel, which, with other trinkets formerly mentioned, had been saved from pillage, and brought to Glendearg, when Mary's mother was driven from her habitation.

"You sigh, my son," said the old man, observing the impression made on his youthful companion's countenance, but mistaking the cause; "if you fear to enter, we may yet return."

"That can ye not," said Christie of the Clinthill, who emerged at that instant from the side-door under the archway. "Look yonder, and choose whether you will return: skimming the water like a wild-duck, or winging the air like a plover."

They looked, and saw that the drawbridge which they had just crossed was again raised, and now interposed its planks betwixt the setting sun and the portal of the castle, deepening the gloom of the arch under which they stood. Christie laughed and bid them follow him, saying, by way of encouragement, in Halbert's ear, "Answer boldly and readily to whatever the Baron asks you. Never stop to pick your words, and above all shew no fear of him—the devil is not so black as he is painted."

As he spoke thus, he introduced them into the large stone hall, at the upper end of which blazed a huge fire of wood. The long oaken table, which, as usual, occupied the midst of the apartment, was covered with rude preparations for the evening meal of the Baron and his chief domestics, five or six of whom, strong, athletic, savage-looking men, paced up and down the lower end of the hall, which rang to the jarring clang of their long swords that clashed as they moved, and to the heavy tramp of their high-heeled jack-boots. Iron jacks, or coats of buff, formed the principal part of their dress, and steel-bonnets, or large slouched hats with Spanish plumes drooping backwards, were their head attire.

The Baron of Avenel was one of those tall, muscular, martial figures, which are the favourite subjects of Salvator Rosa. He wore a cloak which had been once gaily trimmed, but which, by long wear and frequent exposure to the weather, was now faded in its colours. Thrown negligently about

his tall person, it partly hid, and partly showed, a short doublet of buff, under which was in some places visible that light shirt of mail which was called a *surcoat*, because worn instead of more ostensible armour, to protect against private assassination. A leathern belt sustained a large and heavy sword on one side, and on the other that gay poniard which had once called Sir Piercie Shaston master, of which the hatchments and gildings were already much defaced, either by rough usage or neglect.

Notwithstanding the rudeness of his apparel, Julian Avenel's manner and countenance had far more elevation than those of the attendants who surrounded him. He might be fifty or upwards, for his dark hair was mingled with gray, but age had neither tamed the fire of his eye nor the enterprise of his disposition. His countenance had been handsome, for beauty was an attribute of the family; but the lines were roughened by fatigue and exposure to the weather, and rendered coarser by the habitual indulgence of violent passions.

He seemed in deep and moody reflection, and was pacing at a distance from his dependents along the upper end of the hall, sometimes stopping from time to time to caress and feed a gos-hawk, which sat upon his wrist, with its jesses (i.e. the leathern straps fixed to its legs) wrapt around his hand. The bird, which seemed not insensible to its master's attention, answered his caresses by ruffling forward its feathers, and pecking playfully at his finger. At such intervals the Baron smiled, but instantly resumed the darksome air of sullen meditation. He did not even deign to look upon an object, which few could have passed and repassed so often without bestowing on it a transient glance.

This was a woman of exceeding beauty, rather gaily than richly attired, who sat on a low seat close by the large hall chimney. The gold chains round her neck and arms,—the gay gown of green which swept the floor,—the silver-embroidered girdle, with its bunch of keys, depending in house wifely pride by a silver chain,—the yellow silken *cowrecker* (Scottish, *curck*) which was disposed around her head, and partly concealed her dark profusion of hair,—above all, the circumstance so delicately touched in the old ballad, that "the girdle was too short," the "gown of green all too strait," for the wearer's present shape, would have intimidated the Baron's Lady. But then the lowly seat,—the expression of deep melancholy, which was unguessed into a timid smile whenever she saw the least chance of catching the eye of Julian Avenel,—the subdued look of grief, and the starting tear for which that constrained smile was again exchanged when she saw herself entirely disregarded,—these were not the attributes of a wife or they were those of a dejected and afflicted female, who had yielded her love in less than legitimate terms.

Julian Avenel, as we have said, continued to pace the hall without paying any of that mute attention which is rendered to almost every female either by affection or courtesy. He seemed totally unconscious of her presence, or of that of his attendants, and was only roused from his own dark reflections by the notice he paid to the falcon, to which, however, the lady seemed to attend, as if studying to find either an opportunity of speaking to the Baron, or of finding something significant in the expressions which he used to the bird. All

There is an ancient English family, I believe, which bears, as the lion, a shield or shield passant sable in a field argent. It is said to have been a device of a puning or coining knight.

this the strangers had time enough to remark; for no sooner had they entered the apartment than their usher, Christie of the Clinchill, after exchanging a significant glance with the menials or troopers at the lower end of the apartment, signed to Halbert Glendinning and to his companion to stand still near the door, while he himself, advancing nearer the table, placed himself in such a situation as to catch the Baron's observation when he should be disposed to look around, but without presuming to intrude himself on his master's notice. Indeed, the look of this man, naturally bold, hardy, and audacious, seemed totally changed when he was in presence of his master, and resembled the dejected and cowering manner of a quarrelsome dog when rebuked by his owner, or when he finds himself obliged to deprecate the violence of a superior adversary of his own species.

In spite of the novelty of his own situation, and every painful feeling connected with it, Halbert felt his curiosity interested in the female, who sat by the chimney unnoticed and unregarded. He marked with what keen and trembling solicitude she watched the broken words of Julian, and how her glance stole towards him, ready to be averted upon the slightest chance of his perceiving himself to be watched.

Meantime he went on with his dalliance with his feathered favourite, now giving, now withholding, the morsel with which he was about to feed the bird, and so exciting its appetite and gratifying it by turns. "What! more yet!—thou foul kite, thou wouldst never have done—give thee part thou wilt have all—Ay, prune thy feathers, and prink thyself gay—much thou wilt make of it now—dost think I know thee not!—dost think I see not that all that ruffling and pluming of wing and feathers is not for thy master, but to try what thou canst make of him, thou greedy gled!—well—there—take it then, and rejoice thyself—little thou goes far with thee, and with all thy sex—and so it should."

He ceased to look on the bird, and again traversed the apartment. Then taking another small piece of raw meat from the trencher, on which it was placed ready cut for his use, he began once again to tempt and tease the bird, by offering and withdrawing it, until he awakened its wild and bold disposition. "What! struggling, fluttering, aiming at me with beak and single!—So! So! I wouldst mount! wouldst fly! the jesses are found thy clutches, fool—thou canst neither stir nor soar, but by my will—Beware thou come to reclaim, wench, else I will wring thy head off one of these days—Well, have it then, and well fare thou with it.—So ho, Jenkin!" One of the attendants stepped forward—"Take the foul gled hence to the mew—or, stay; leave her, but look well to her casting and to her bathing—we will see her fly to-morrow.—How now, Christie, so soon returned?"

Christie advanced to his master, and gave an account of himself and his journey, in the way in which a police-officer holds communication with his magistrate, that is, as much by signs as by words.

"Noble sir," said that worthy apostle, "the Laird of—"
"he seemed no place, but, pointed with his

finger in a south-western direction,—"*may not ride with you the day he purposed, because the Laird Warden has threatened that he will*—"

Here another blank, intelligibly enough made up by the speaker touching his own neck with his left fore-finger, and leaning his head a little to one side.

"Cowardly caithiff!" said Julian; "by Heaven! the whole world turns sheer naught—it is not worth a brave man's living in—ye may ride a day and night, and never see a feather wave or hear a horse prance—the spirit of our fathers is dead amongst us—the very brutes are degenerated—the cattle we bring home at our life's risk are mere carrion—our hawks are rifiers—our hounds are turnspits and spindle-tails—our men are women—and our women are—"

He looked at the female for the first time, and stopped short in the midst of what he was about to say, though there was something so contemptuous in the glance, that the blank might have been thus filled up—"Our women are such as she is."

He said it not, however, and, as if desirous of attracting his attention at all risks, and in whatever manner, she rose and came forward to him, but with a timorousness ill-disguised by affected gaiety.—"Our women, Julian—what would you say of the women?"

"Nothing," answered Julian Avenel, "at least nothing but that they are kind-hearted wenches like thyself, Kate." The female coloured deeply, and returned to her seat.—"And what strangers hast thou brought with thee, Christie, that stand yonder like two stone statues?" said the Baron.

"The tallest," answered Christie, "is, so please you, a young fellow called Halbert Glendinning, the eldest son of the old widow at Glendearg."

"What brings him here?" said the Baron; "hath he any message from Mary Avenel?"

"Not as I think," said Christie; "the youth is roving the country—he was always a wild slip, for I have known him since he was the height of my sword."

"What qualities hath he?" said the Baron.

"All manner of qualities," answered his follower—"he can strike a buck, track a deer, fly a hawk, halloo to a hound—he shoots in the long and crossbow to a hair's-breadth—wields a lance or sword like myself nearly—lacks a horse manfully and fairly—I wot not what more a man need to do to make him a gallant companion."

"And who," said the Baron, "is the old miser who stands beside him?"

"Some cast of a priest as I fancy—he says he is charged with letters to you."

"Bid them come forward," said the Baron; and no sooner had they approached him more nearly, than, struck by the fine form and strength displayed by Halbert Glendinning, he addressed him thus: "I am told, young swankie, that you are roaming the world to seek your fortune—if you will serve Julian Avenel, you may find it without going farther."

"So please you," answered Glendinning, "something has chanced to me that makes it better I

¹ So termed when they only caught their prey by the footman.

² Miser, used in the sense in which it often occurs in Spanish, and which is indeed its literal import.—"wretched old man."

³ In the Scottish language of hunting, as Lady Juliana Benson terms it, "to point" means to direct their sight.

should leave this land, and I am bound for Edinburgh."

"What!—thou hast stricken some of the king's deer, I warrant,—or lightened the meadows of Saint Mary's of some of their beeves—or thou hast taken a moonlight leap over the border!"

"No, sir," said Halbert, "my case is entirely different."

"Then I warrant thee," said the Baron, "thou hast stabbed some brother churl in a fray about a wench—thou art a likely lad to wrangle in such a cause."

Ineffably disgusted at his tone and manner, Halbert Glendinning remained silent, while the thought darted across his mind, what would Julian Avenel have said, had he known the quarrel, of which he spoke so lightly, had arisen on account of his own brother's daughter!—"But be thy cause of fight what it will," said Julian, in continuation, "dost thou think the law or its emissaries can follow thee into this island, or arrest thee under the standard of Avenel!—Look at the depth of the lake, the strength of the walls, the length of the causeway—look at my men, and think if they are likely to see a comrade injured, or if I, their master, am a man to desert a faithful follower in good or evil. I tell thee, it shall be an eternal day of truce betwixt thee and justice, as they call it, from the instant thou hast put my colours into thy cap—thou shalt ride by the Warden's nose as thou wouldst pass an old market-woman, and ne'er a cur which follows him shall dare to bay at thee!"

"I thank you for your offers, noble sir," replied Halbert, "but I must answer in brief, that I cannot profit by them—my fortunes lead me elsewhere."

"Thou art a self-willed fool for thy pains," said Julian, turning from him; and signing Christie to approach, he whispered in his ear, "There is promise in that young fellow's looks, Christie, and we want men of limbs and sinews so compacted—those thou hast brought to me of late are the mere refuse of mankind, wretches scarce worth the arrow that ends them: this youngster is limbed like Saint George. Ply him with wine and wassail—let the wenches weave their meshes about him like spiders—thou understandest!" Christie gave a sagacious nod of intelligence, and fell back to a respectful distance from his master.—"And thou, old man," said the Baron, turning to the elder traveller, "hast thou been roaming the world after fortune too!—it seems not she has fallen into thy way?"

"So please you," replied Warden, "I were perhaps more to be pitied than I am now, had I indeed met with that fortune, which, like others, I have sought in my greener days."

"Nay, understand me, friend," said the Baron; "if thou art satisfied with thy buckram gown and long staff, I also am well content thou shouldst be as poor and contemptible as in good for the health of thy body and soul—All I care to know of thee is, the cause which hath brought thee to my castle, where few crows of thy kind care to settle. Thou art, I warrant thee, some ejected monk of a suppressed convent, paying in his old days the price of the luxurious idleness in which he spent his youth."

"Ay, or it may be some pilgrim with a budget of the *Sancta* Saint James of Compostella, or Our Lady of Loretto; or thou mayest be some pardoner with his budget of relics from Rome, forgiving sins at a penny a dozen, and one to the tale—Ay, I guess

why I find thee in this boy's company, and doubtless thou wouldst have such a strapping lad as he to carry thy wallet, and relieve thy lazy shoulders, but, by the mass, I will cross thy cunning. I make my vow to sun and moon, I will not see a proper lad so mislead as to run the country with an old knave, like Simmie and his brother." Away with thee!" he added, rising in wrath, and speaking so fast as to give no opportunity of answer, being probably determined to terrify the elder guest into an abrupt flight—"Away with thee, with thy clouted coat, scrip, and scallop-shell, or, by the name of Avenel, I will have them loose the hounds on thee!"

Warden waited with the greatest patience until Julian Avenel, astonished that the threats and violence of his language made no impression on him, passed in a sort of wonder, and said in a less imperious tone, "Why the fiend dost thou not answer me!"

"When you have done speaking," said Warden, in the same composed manner, "it will be full time to reply."

"Say on, man, in the devil's name—but take heed—beg not here—were it but for the rinds of cheese, the refuse of the rats, or a morsel that my dogs would turn from—neither a grain of meal, nor the nineteenth part of a gray goat, will I give to any feigned limmar of thy coat."

"It may be," answered Warden, "that you would have less quarrel with my coat if you knew what it covers. I am neither a friar nor mendicant, and would be right glad to hear thy testimony against these foul deceivers of God's church, and usurpers of his rights over the Christian flock, were it given in Christian charity."

"And who or what art thou, then," said Avenel, "that thou dost to this Border land, and art neither monk, nor soldier, nor broken man?"

"I am a humble teacher of the holy word," answered Warden, "This letter from a most noble person will speak why I am here at this present time."

He delivered the letter to the Baron, who regarded the seal with some surprise, and then looked on the letter itself, which seemed to excite still more. He then fixed his eyes on the stranger, and said, in a menacing tone, "I think thou darrest not betray me, or deceive me!"

"I am not the man to attempt either," was the concise reply.

Julian Avenel carried the letter to the window, where he perused, or at least attempted to peruse it more than once, often looking from the paper and gazing on the stranger who had delivered it, as if he meant to read the purport of the missive in the face of the messenger. Julian at length called to the female,—"Catherine, bestir thee, and fetch me presently that letter which I bade thee keep ready at hand in thy cabinet, having no more lock-fast place of my own."

Catherine went with the readiness of one willing to be employed; and as she walked, the attention which requires a wider gown and a larger grille, and in which women claim from men a double portion of the most anxious care; was still more visible than before. She soon returned with the

1 Two gentlemen, on hearing from whom news came, and regency made the subject of an old Scottish political poem.

paper, and was rewarded with a cold—"I thank thee, wench; thou art a careful secretary."

This second paper he also perused and repurposed more than once, and still, as he read it, bent from time to time a wary and observant eye upon Henry Warden. This examination and re-examination, though both the man and the place were dangerous, the preacher endured with the most composed and steady countenance, seeming, under the eagle, or other the vulture eye of the Baron, as unmoved as under the gaze of an ordinary and peaceful peasant. At length Julian Avenel folded both papers, and having put them into the pocket of his cloak, cleared his brow, and, coming forward, addressed his female companion. "Catherine," said he, "I have done this good man injustice, when I mistook him for one of the drunes of Rome. He is a preacher, Catherine—a preacher of the—the new doctrine of the Lords of the Congregation."

"The doctrine of the blessed Scriptures," said the preacher, "purified from the devices of men."

"Sayest thou?" said Julian Avenel—"Well, thou mayest call it what thou list; but to me it is recommended, because it flings off all those sottish dreams about saints and angels and devils, and unhorses the lazy monks that have ridden us so long, and spur-galled us so hard. No more masses and corpse-gifts—no more tithes and offerings to make men poor—no more prayers or psalms to make men cowardly—no more christenings and penances, and confessions and marriages."

"So please you," said Henry Warden, "it is against the corruptions, not against the fundamental doctrines, of the church, which we desire to renovate, and not to abolish."

"Frithee, peace, man," said the Baron; "we of the luty care not what you set up, so you pull merrily down what stands in our way. Specially it suits well with us of the Southland fells; for it is our profession to turn the world upside down, and we live ever the blithest life when the downer side is uppermost."

Warden would have replied; but the Baron allowed him not time, striking the table with the hilt of his dagger, and crying out—"Ha! you, loitering knaves, bring our supper-meal quickly. See you not this holy man is exhausted for lack of food! Heard ye ever of priest or preacher that devoted not his five meals a-day?"

The attendants hustled to and fro, and speedily brought in several large smoking platters, filled with lunge pieces of beef, boiled and roasted, but without any variety whatsoever; without vegetables, and almost without bread, though there was at the upper end a few oat-cakes in a basket. Julian Avenel made a sort of apology to Warden.

"You have been commended to our care, Sir Preacher, since that is your style, by a person whom we highly honour."

"I am assured," said Warden, "that the most noble Lord—"

"Frithee, peace, man," said Avenel; "what need of naming names, so we understand each other! I meant but to speak in reference to your safety and comfort, of which he desires us to be sure. Now, for your safety, look at my walls and water. But touching your comfort, we have no corn of our own, and the meal-grains of the south are less easily transported than their heaves, seeing I have no legs to walk upon. But what though!

a stoup of wise thou shalt have; and of the best—thou shalt sit betwixt Catherine and me at the board-end.—And, Christie, do thou look to the young springald, and call to the cellarer for a flagon of the best."

The Baron took his wonted place at the upper end of the board; his Catherine sat down, and courteously pointed to a seat betwixt them for their reverend guest. But notwithstanding the influence both of hunger and fatigue, Henry Warden retained his standing posture.

CHAPTER XXV.

- "When lovely woman stoops to folly,
- And finds too late that men betray."

JULIAN AVENEL saw with surprise the demeanour of the reverend stranger. "Beskrow me," he said, "these new-fashioned religioners have fast-days, I warrant me—the old ones used to confer these blessings chiefly on the luty."

"We acknowledge no such rule," said the preacher—"We hold that our faith consists not in using or abstaining from special meats on special days; and in fasting we round our hearts, and not our garments."

"The better—the better for yourselves, and the worse for Tom Tailor," said the Baron; "but come, sit down, or, if thou needs must, e'en give us a cast of thy office, mutter thy charm."

"Sir Baron," said the preacher, "I am in a strange land, where neither mine office nor my doctrine are known, and where, it would seem, both are greatly misunderstood. It is my duty so to bear me, that in my person, however unworthy, my Master's dignity may be respected, and that sin may take no confidence from relaxation of the bonds of discipline."

"Ho! la! halt there," said the Baron; "thou wert sent hither for thy safety, but not, I think, to preach to, or control me. What is it thou wouldst have, Sir Preacher! Remember thou speakest to one somewhat short of patience, who loves a short health and a long draught."

"In a word, then," said Henry Warden, "that lady—"

"How!" said the Baron, starting—"what of her?—what hast thou to say of that dame?"

"Is she thy house-dame?" said the preacher, after a moment's pause, in which he seemed to seek for the best mode of expressing what he had to say—"Is she, in brief, thy wife?"

The unfortunate young woman pressed both her hands on her face, as if to hide it, but the dapp blush which crimsoned her brow and neck, shewed that her cheeks were also glowing; and the burning tears, which found their way betwixt her slender fingers, bore witness to her sorrow, as well as to her shame.

"Now, by my father's ashes!" said the Baron, rising and spurning from him his footstool with such violence, that it hit the wall on the opposite side of the apartment—then instantly constraining himself, he muttered—"What need to run myself into trouble for a fool's word!"—then resuming his seat, he answered coldly and scornfully—"No, Sir Priest or Sir Preacher, Catherine is not my

wife—Cease thy whimpering, thou foolish wench—she is not my wife, but she is handfasted with me, and that makes her as honest a woman.”

“Handfasted?”—repeated Warden.

“Knowest thou not that rite, holy man?” said Avenel, in the same tone of derision; “then I will tell thee. We Border-men are more wary than your inland clowns of Fife and Lothian—no jump in the dark for us—no clenching the fetters around our wrists till we know how they will wear with us—we take our wives, like our horses, upon trial. When we are handfasted, as we term it, we are man and wife for a year and day—that space gone by, each may choose another mate, or, at their pleasure, may call the priest to marry them for life—and thus we call handfasting.”

“Then,” said the preacher, “I tell thee, noble Baron, in brotherly love to thy soul, it is a custom licentious, gross, and corrupted, and if persisted in, dangerous, yea, damnable. It binds thee to the frailer being while she is the object of desire—it relieves thee when she is most the subject of pity—it gives all to brutal sense, and nothing to generous and gentle affection. I say to thee, that he who can meditate the breach of such an engagement, abandoning the deluded woman and the helpless offspring, is worse than the birds of prey; for of them the males remain with their mates until the nestlings can take wing. Above all, I say it is contrary to the pure Christian doctrine, which assigns woman to man as the partner of his labour, the saviour of his evil, his helpmate in peril, his friend in affliction; not, as the toy of his looser hours, or as a flower, which, once cropped, he may throw aside at pleasure.”

“Now, by the Saints, a most virtuous homily!” said the Baron; “quaintly conceived and curiously pronounced, and to a well-chosen congregation. Hark ye, Sir Gospeller! frow ye to have a fool in hand! Know I not that your sect rose by bluff Harry Tudor, merely because ye aided him to change his Kate; and wherefore should I not use the same Christian liberty with mine? Tush, man! bless the good food, and meddle not with what concerns thee not—thou hast no gull in Julian Avenel.”

“He hath gulled and cheated himself,” said the preacher, “should he even incline to do that poor sharer of his domestic cares the imperfect justice that remains to him. Can he now raise her to the rank of a pure and uncontaminated matron?—Can he deprive his child of the misery of owing birth to a mother who has erred? He can indeed give them both the rank, the state of married wife and of lawful son; but, in public opinion, their names will be smirched and sullied with a stain which his tardy efforts cannot entirely efface. Yet render it to them, Baron of Avenel, render to them this late and imperfect justice. Bid me bind you together for ever, and celebrate the day of your bridal, not with feasting or wassail, but with sorrow for past sin, and the resolution to commence a better life. Happy then will have the chance been that has drawn me to this castle, though I

come driven by calamity, and unknowing where my course is bound, like a leaf travelling on the north wind.”

The plain, and even coarse features, of the zealous speaker, were warmed at once and ennobled by the dignity of his enthusiasm; and the wild Baron, lawless as he was, and accustomed to spurn at the control whether of religious or moral law, felt, for the first time perhaps in his life, that he was under subjection to a mind superior to his own. He sat mute and suspended in his deliberations, hesitating betwixt anger and shame, yet borne down by the weight of the just rebuke thus boldly fulminated against him.

The unfortunate young woman, conceiving hopes from her tyrant's silence and apparent indecision, forgot both her fear and shame in her timid expectation that Avenel would relent;—and fixing upon him her anxious and beseeching eyes, gradually drew near and nearer to his seat, till at length, laying a trembling hand on his cloak, she ventured to utter, “O noble Julian, listen to the good man!”

The speech and the motion were ill-timed, and wrought on that proud and wayward spirit the reverse of her wishes.

The fierce Baron started up in fury, exclaiming, “What! thou foolish callet, art thou confederate with this strolling vagabond, whom thou hast seen beard me in mine own hall! Hence with thee, and think that I am proof both to male and female hypocrisy!”

The poor girl started back, astounded at his voice of thunder and looks of fury, and, turning pale as death, endeavoured to obey his orders, and tottered towards the door. Her limbs failed in the attempt, and she fell on the stone floor in a manner which her situation might have rendered fatal.—The blood gushed from her face.—Halbert Glendinning brooked not a sight so brutal, but, uttering a deep imprecation, started from his seat, and laid his hand on his sword, under the strong impulse of passing it through the body of the cruel and hard-hearted ruffian. But Christie of the Clintbill, guessing his intention, threw his arms around him, and prevented him from stirring to execute his purpose.

The impulse to such a dangerous act of violence was indeed but momentary, as it instantly appeared that Avenel himself, shocked at the effects of his violence, was lifting up and endeavouring to soothe in his own way the terrified Catherine.

“Peace,” he said, “prithes, peace, thou silly minion—why, Kate, though I listen not to this tramping preacher, I said not what might happen as thou dost bear me a stout boy. There—there—dry thy tears—call thy women.—So ho!—where be these queans!—Christie—Rowley—Hutchinson—drag them hither by the hair of the head!”

A half dozen of started wild-looking females rushed into the room, and bore out her who might be either termed their mistress or their companion. She showed little sign of life, except by gasping faintly and keeping her hand on her side.

No sooner had this luckless female been conveyed from the apartment, than the Baron, advancing to the table, filled and drank a deep goblet of wine; then, putting an obvious restraint on his passions, turned to the preacher, who stood hitherto struck at the scene he had witnessed, and said,

This custom of handfasting actually prevailed in the inland parts, &c. more partly from the want of priests. While the church retained, monks were detached on regular circuits through the wild districts, to marry those who had fled in this species of connection. A practice of the same kind existed in the Isle of Portland.

"You have borne too hard on us, Sir Preacher—but coming with the commendations which you have brought me, I doubt not but your meaning was good. But we are wilder folk than you inland men of Fife and Lothian: Be advised, therefore, by me—Spur not an unbroken horse—put not your ploughshare too deep into new land—Preach to us spiritual liberty, and we will hearken to you.—But we will give no way to spiritual bondage.—Sit, therefore, down, and pledge me in old sack, and we will talk over other matters."

"It is from spiritual bondage," said the preacher, in the same tone of admonitory reproof, "that I came to deliver you—it is from a bondage more fearful than that of the heaviest earthly gyves—it is from your own evil passions."

"Sit down," said Avenel, fiercely; "sit down while the play is good—else by my father's crest and my mother's honour!"

"Now," whispered Christie of the Clinthill to Halbert, "if he refuse to sit down, I would not give a gray goat for his head."

"Lord Baron," said Warden, "thou hast placed me in extremity. But if the question be, whether I am to hide the light which I am commanded to shew forth, or to lose the light of this world, my choice is made. I say to thee, like the Holy Baptist to Herod, it is not lawful for thee to have this woman; and I say it, though bonds and death be the consequence, counting my life as nothing in comparison of the ministry to which I am called."

Julian Avenel, enraged at the firmness of this reply, flung from his right hand the cup in which he was about to drink to his guest, and from the other cast off the hawk, which flew wildly through the apartment. His first motion was to lay hand upon his dagger. But, changing his resolution, he exclaimed, "To the dungeon with this insolent stroller!—I will hear no man speak a word for him.—Look to the falcon, Christie, thou fool!—an she escape, I will despatch you after her every man.—Away with that hypocritical dreamer—drag him hence if he resist!"

He was obeyed in both points. Christie of the Clinthill arrested the hawk's flight, by putting his foot on her jesses, and so holding her fast, while Henry Warden was led off, without having shewn the slightest symptoms of terror, by two of the Baron's satellites. Julian Avenel walked the apartment for a short time in sullen silence, and despatching one of his attendants with a whispered message, which probably related to the health of the unfortunate Catherine, he said aloud, "These rash and meddling priests—By Heaven! they make us worse than we would be without them!"

The answer which he presently received seemed somewhat to pacify his angry mood, and he took his place at the board, commanding his retinue to do the like. All sat down in silence, and began the repast.

During the meal Christie in vain attempted to engage his youthful companion in carousal, or, at least, in conversation. Halbert Glendinning pleaded fatigue, and expressed himself unwilling to take any liquor stronger than the heather ale, which was at that time frequently used at meals. These every effort at jollity died away, until the Baron, striking his hand against the table, as if

impatient of the long unbroken silence, cried out aloud, "What, ho! my masters—are ye Border-riders, and sit as mute over your meal as a mews of monks and friars!—Some one sing, if no one list to speak. Meat eaten without either mirth or music is ill of digestion.—Louie," he added, speaking to one of the youngest of his followers, "thou art ready enough to sing when no one bids thee."

The young man looked first at his master, then up to the arched roof of the hall, then drank off the horn of ale, or wine, which stood beside him, and with a rough, yet not unmelodious voice, sung the following ditty to the ancient air of "Blue Bonnets over the Border."

I.

March, march, Kilrick and Toriotdale,
Why the dail dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale,
All the Blue Bonnets are bound for the Border.
Many a banner spread,
Flutters above your head,
Many a quest that is famous in story,
Mount and make ready then,
Some of the mountain glen,
Fight for the Queen and the old Scottish glory!

II.

Come from the hills where the hirsels are grazing,
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the erag where the beacon is blazing,
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow
Trumpets are sounding,
War-steeds are bounding,
Stand to your arms then, and march in good order,
England shall many a day
Tell of the bloody fray,
When the Blue Bonnets came over the Border!

The song, rude as it was, had in it that warlike character which at any other time would have roused Halbert's spirit; but at present the charm of minstrelsy had no effect upon him. He made it his request to Christie to suffer him to retire to rest, a request with which that worthy person, seeing no chance of making a favourable impression on his intended proselyte in his present humour, was at length pleased to comply. But no Sergeant Kite, who ever practised the profession of recruiting, was more attentive that his object should not escape him, than was Christie of the Clinthill. He indeed conducted Halbert Glendinning to a small apartment overlooking the lake, which was accommodated with a truckle bed. But before quitting him, Christie took special care to give a look to the bars which crossed the outside of the window, and when he left the apartment, he failed not to give the key a double turn; circumstances which convinced young Glendinning that there was no intention of suffering him to depart from the Castle of Avenel at his own time and pleasure. He judged it, however, most prudent to let these alarming symptoms pass without observation.

No sooner did he find himself in undisturbed solitude, than he ran rapidly over the events of the day in his recollection, and to his surprise found that his own precarious fate, and even the death of Pierce Shafton, made less impression on him than the singularly bold and determined conduct of his companion, Henry Warden. Providence, which suits its instruments to the end they are to achieve, had awakened in the cause of Reformation in Scotland, a body of preachers of more energy than refinement, bold in spirit, and strong in faith, consumers of whatever stood against them and their principal object, and seeking the

advancement of the great cause in which they laboured by the roughest road, provided it were the shortest. The soft breeze may wave the willow, but it requires the voice of the tempest to agitate the boughs of the oak; and, accordingly, to milder hearers, and in a less rude age, their manners would have been ill adapted, but they were singularly successful in their mission to the rude people to whom it was addressed.

Owing to these reasons, Halbert Glendinning, who had resisted and repelled the arguments of the preacher, was forcibly struck by the firmness of his demeanour in the dispute with Julian Avenel. It might be discourteous, and most certainly it was incautious, to choose such a place and such an audience, for upbraiding with his transgressions a baron, whom both manners and situation placed in full possession of independent power. But the conduct of the preacher was uncompromising, firm, manly, and obviously grounded upon the deepest conviction which duty and principle could afford; and Glendinning, who had viewed the conduct of Avenel with the deepest abhorrence, was proportionally interested in the brave old man, who had ventured life rather than withhold the censure due to guilt. This pitch of virtue seemed to him to be in religion what was demanded by chivalry of her votaries in war; an absolute surrender of all selfish feelings, and a combination of every energy proper to the human mind, to discharge the task which duty demanded.

Halbert was at the period when youth was most open to generous emotions, and knows best how to appreciate them in others, and he felt, although he hardly knew why, that, whether catholic or heretic, the safety of this man deeply interested him. Curiosity mingled with the feeling, and led him to wonder what the nature of those doctrines could be, which stole their votary so completely from himself, and devoted him to chains or to death as their sworn champion. He had indeed been told of saints and martyrs of former days, who had braved for their religious faith the extremity of death and torture. But their spirit of enthusiastic devotion had long slept in the ease and indolent habits of their successors, and their adventures, like those of knights-errant, were rather read for amusement than for edification. A new impulse had been necessary to rekindle the energies of religious zeal, and that impulse was now operating in favour of a purer religion, with one of whose steepest votaries the youth had now met for the first time.

The sense that he himself was a prisoner, under the power of this savage chieftain, by no means diminished Halbert's interest in the fate of his fellow-sufferer, while he determined at the same time so far to emulate his fortitude, that neither threats nor suffering should compel him to enter into the service of such a master. The possibility of escape next occurred to him, and though with little hope of effecting it in that way, Glendinning proceeded to examine more particularly the window of the apartment. The apartment was situated in the first story of the castle; and was not so far from the rock on which it was founded, but that an active and bold man might with little assistance ascend to a shelf of the rock which was immediately below the window, and from thence either leap or drop himself down into the lake which lay below his eye, clear and blue in the glacial light

of a full summer's moon. — "Were I once placed on that ledge," thought Glendinning, "Julian Avenel and Christie had been the last of me." The size of the window favoured such an attempt, but the stanchions or iron bars seemed to form an insurmountable obstacle.

While Halbert Glendinning gazed from the window with that eagerness of hope which was prompted by the energy of his character and his determination not to yield to circumstances, his ear caught some sounds from below, and listening with more attention, he could distinguish the voice of the preacher engaged in his solitary devotions. To open a correspondence with him became immediately his object, and failing to do so by less marked sounds, he at length ventured to speak, and was answered from beneath — "Is it thou, my son?" The voice of the prisoner now sounded more distinctly than when it was first heard, for Warden had approached the small aperture, which serving his prison for a window, opened just betwixt the wall and the rock, and admitted a scanty portion of light through a wall of immense thickness. This respirail being placed exactly under Halbert's window, the contiguity permitted the prisoners to converse in a low tone, when Halbert declared his intention to escape, and the possibility he saw of achieving his purpose, but for the iron stanchions of the window — "Prove thy strength, my son, in the name of God!" said the preacher. Halbert obeyed him more in despair than hope, but to his great astonishment, and somewhat to his terror, the bar parted asunder near the bottom, and the longer part being easily bent outwards, and not secured with lead in the upper socket, dropt out into Halbert's hand. He immediately whispered, but as energetically as a whisper could be expressed — "By Heaven the bar has given way in my hand!"

"Thank Heaven, my son, instead of swearing by it," answered Warden from his dungeon.

With little effort Halbert Glendinning forced himself through the opening thus wonderfully effected, and using his leathern sword-belt as a rope to assist him, let himself safely drop on the shelf of rock upon which the preacher's window opened. But through this no passage could be effected, being scarce larger than a loophole for musketry, and apparently constructed for that purpose.

"Are there no means by which I can assist your escape, my father?" said Halbert.

"There are none, my son," answered the preacher; "but if thou wilt ensure my safety, that may be in thy power."

"I will labour earnestly for it," said the youth.

"Take then a letter which I will presently write, for I have the means of light and writing materials in my scrip — Hasten towards Edinburgh, and on the way thou wilt meet a body of horse marching southwards — Give this to their leader, and acquaint him of the state in which thou hast left me. It may hap that thy doing so will advantage thyself."

In a minute or two the light of a taper gleamed through the shot-hole; and very shortly after, the preacher, with the assistance of his staff, pushed a billet to Glendinning through the window.

"God bless thee, my son," said the old man, "and complete the marvellous work which he has begun."

"Amen!" answered Halbert, with solemnity, and proceeded on his enterprise.

He hesitated a moment whether he should attempt to descend to the edge of the water; but the steepness of the rock, and darkness of the night, rendered the enterprise too dangerous. He clasped his hands above his head and boldly sprung from the precipice, shooting himself forward into the air as far as he could for fear of sunken rocks, and alighted on the lake, head foremost, with such force as sunk him for a minute below the surface. But strong, long-breathed, and accustomed to such exercise, Halbert, even though encumbered with his sword, dived and rose like a sea-fowl, and swam across the lake in the northern direction. When he landed and looked back on the castle, he could observe that the alarm had been given, for lights glanced from window to window, and he heard the drawbridge lowered, and the tread of horses' feet upon the causeway. But, little alarmed for the consequence of a pursuit during the darkness, he wrung the water from his dress, and, plunging into the moors, directed his course to the north-east by the assistance of the polar star.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Why, what an intricate tangle is this!

I think you all have drank of Circe's cup.

If here you bowed him, here he would have been: ••

If he were mad, he would not plead so coldly.
Comedy of Errors.

THE course of our story, leaving for the present Halbert Glendinning to the guidance of his courage and his fortune, returns to the Tower of Glendearg, where matters in the meanwhile fell out, with which it is most fitting that the reader should be acquainted.

The meal was prepared at noon tide with all the care which Elspeth and Tibb, assisted by the various accommodations which had been supplied from the Monastery, could bestow on it. Their dialogue ran on as usual in the intervals of their labour, partly as between mistress and servant, partly as maintained by gossips of nearly equal quality.

"Look to the minced meat, Tibb," said Elspeth; "and turn the broach even, thou good-for-nothing Simmie, — thy wits are harrying birds' nests, child. — Weel, Tibb, this is a faebous job, this Sir Pierce lying laugher with us up here, and wha kens for how lang!"

"A faebous job indeed," answered her faithful attendant, "and little good did the name ever bring to fair Scotland. Ye may have your hands fuller of them than they are yet — Mony a sair heart have the Piercies given to Scots wife and bairns with their pricking on the Borders. There was Hotspur, and many more of that bloody kindred, have sae in our skirts since Malcolm's time, as Martin says!"

"Martin should keep a weel-scrappit tongue in his head," said Elspeth, "and not slander the kin of my body that quarters at Glendearg; forby, that Sir Pierce Glendon is much respected with the bely fathers of the community, and they will make up to us ous faebous that we may have with him, either by good word or good deed, I see war-

rant them. He is a considerable lord the Lord Abbot."

"And weel he likes a soft seat to his hinder end," said Tibb; "I have seen a belted baron sit on a bare bench, and find nae fault. But an ye are pleased, mistress, I am pleased."

"Now, in good time, here comes Mysie of the Mill. — And whare has ye been, lass, for a's gait wrang without you?" said Elspeth.

"I just gaed a blink up the burn," said Mysie, "for the young lady has been down on her bed, and is no just that weel — So I gaed a giff up the burn."

"To see the young lads come hame frae the sport, I will warrant you," said Elspeth. "Ay, ay, Tibb, that's the way the young folk guide us, Tibbie — leave us to do the wark, and out to the play themselves!"

"No'er a bit of that, mistress," said the Maid of the Mill, stripping her round pretty arms, and looking actively and good-humouredly round for some duty that she could discharge, "but just — I thought ye might like to ken if they were coming back, just to get the dinner forward."

"And saw ye ought of them then?" demanded Elspeth.

"Not the least tokening," said Mysie, "though I got to the head of a knowe, and though the English knight's beautiful white feather could have been seen over all the bushes in the Shaw."

"The knight's white feather!" said Dame Glendinning; "ye are a silly hempie — my Halbert's high head will be seen farther than his feather, let it be as white as a lily, I trow."

Mysie made no answer, but began to knead dough for wastel-cake with all despatch, observing that Sir Pierce had partaken of that dainty, and commended it upon the preceding day. And presently, in order to place on the fire the *girdle*, or iron plate on which these cakes were to be baked, she displaced a stew-pan in which some of Tibb's delicacies were submitted to the action of the kitchen fire. Tibb muttered betwixt her teeth — "And it is the broth for my sick bairn, that maun make room for the dainty Southron's wastel-bread. It was a blithe time in Wight Wallace's day, or good King Robert's, when the pock-puddings gat naething here but hard straits and bloody crowns. But we will see how it will a' end."

Elspeth did not think it proper to notice these discontented expressions of Tibbie, but they sunk into her mind; for she was apt to consider her as a sort of authority in matters of war and policy, with which her former experience as bower-woman at Avenel Castle made her better acquainted than were the peaceful inhabitants of the Haldome. She only spoke, however, to express her surprise that the hunters did not return.

"An they come not back the nooner," said Tibb, "they will fare the waur, for the meat will be roasted to a cinder — and there is poor Simmie that can turn the spit nae langer: the bairn is melting like an icicle in warm water — Gang awa, bairn, and take a mouthful of the saller air, and I will turn the broach till ye come back."

"Rin up to the bairdman at the tower-head, callant," said Dame Glendinning, "the air will be callanter there than ony gate else, and bring us word if our Halbert and the gentlemen are coming down the glen."

The boy lingered long enough to allow his substitute, Tibb Tackett, heartily to tire of her own generosity, and of his cricket-stool by the side of a huge fire. He at length returned with the news that he had seen nobody.

The matter was not remarkable so far as Halbert Glendinning was concerned, for, patient alike of want and of fatigue, it was no uncommon circumstance for him to remain in the wilds till curfew time. But nobody had given Sir Pierce Shafton credit for being so keen a sportsman, and the idea of an Englishman preferring the chase to his dinner was altogether inconsistent with their preconceptions of the national character. Amidst wondering and conjecturing, the usual dinner-hour passed long away; and the inmates of the tower, taking a hasty meal themselves, adjourned their more solemn preparations until the hunters' return at night, since it seemed now certain that their sport had either carried them to a greater distance, or engaged them for a longer time than had been expected.

About four hours after noon, arrived, not the expected sportsmen, but an unlooked for visitant, the Sub-Prior from the Monastery. The scene of the preceding day had dwelt on the mind of Father Ennace, who was of that keen and penetrating cast of mind which loves not to leave unascertained whatever of mysterious is subjected to its inquiry. His kindness was interested in the family of Glendearg, which he had now known for a long time; and besides, the community was interested in the preservation of the peace betwixt Sir Pierce Shafton and his youthful host, since whatever might draw public attention to the former, could not fail to be prejudicial to the Monastery, which was already threatened by the hand of power. He found the family assembled all but Mary Avenel, and was informed that Halbert Glendinning had accompanied the stranger on a day's sport. So far was well. They had not returned; but when did youth and sport conceive themselves bound by set hours! and the circumstance excited no alarm in his mind.

While he was conversing with Edward Glendinning touching his progress in the studies he had pointed out to him, they were startled by a shriek from Mary Avenel's apartment, which drew the whole family thither in headlong haste. They found her in a swoon in the arms of old Martin, who was bitterly accusing himself of having killed her; so indeed it seemed, for her pale features and closed eyes argued rather a dead corpse than a living person. The whole family were instantly in tumult. Snatching her from Martin's arms with the eagerness of affectionate terror, Edward bore her to the apartment, that she might receive the influence of the open air; the Sub-Prior, who, like many of his profession, had some knowledge of medicine, hastened to prescribe the readiest remedies which occurred to him, and the terrified females contended with, and impeded each other, in their rival efforts to be useful.

"It has been one of her waxy ghosts," said Dame Glendinning.

"It's just a trembling on her spirits, as her mother used to have," said Tibb.

"It is some ill news has come over her," said the miller's maid; while burnt sugar, cold water, and all the usual means of restoring con-

scious animation, were employed alternately, and with little effect.

At length a new assistant, who had joined the group unobserved, tendered his aid in the following terms:—"How is this, my most fair Discretion! What cause hath moved the ruby current of life to rush back to the citadel of the heart, leaving pale those features in which it should have delighted to meander for ever!—Let me approach her," he said, "with this sovereign essence, distilled by the fair hands of the divine Urania, and powerful to recall fugitive life, even if it were trembling on the verge of departure."

Thus speaking, Sir Pierce Shafton knelt down, and most gracefully presented to the nostrils of Mary Avenel a silver pouncet-box, exquisitely chased, containing a sponge dipped in the essence which he recommended so highly. Yes, gentle reader, it was Sir Pierce Shafton himself who, thus unexpectedly proffered his good offices! his cheeks, indeed, very pale, and some part of his dress stained with blood, but not otherwise appearing different from what he was on the preceding evening. But no sooner had Mary Avenel opened her eyes, and fixed them on the figure of the officious courtier, than she screamed faintly, and exclaimed,—
"Secure the murderer!"

Those present stood aghast with astonishment, and none more so than the Euphuist, who found himself so suddenly and so strangely accused by the patient whom he was endeavouring to succour, and who repelled his attempts to yield her assistance with all the energy of abhorrence.

"Take him away!" she exclaimed—"take away the murderer!"

"Now, by my knighthood," answered Sir Pierce, "your lovely faculties either of mind or body are O my most fair Discretion, obnubilated by some strange hallucination. For either your eyes do not discern that it is Pierce Shafton, your most devoted Affability, who now stands before you, or else, your eyes discerning truly, your mind hath most erroneously concluded that he hath been guilty of some defect or violence to which his hand is a stranger. No murder, O most scornful Discretion, hath been this day done, saving but that which your angry glances are now performing on your most devoted captive."

He was here interrupted by the Sub-Prior, who had, in the meantime, been speaking with Martin apart, and had received from him an account of the circumstances, which, suddenly communicated to Mary Avenel, had thrown her into this state. "Sir Knight," said the Sub-Prior, in a very solemn tone, yet with some hesitation, "circumstances have been communicated to us of a nature so extraordinary, that, reluctant as I am to exercise such authority over a guest of our venerable community, I am constrained to request from you an explanation of them. You left this tower early in the morning, accompanied by a youth, Halbert Glendinning, the eldest son of this good dame, and you return hither without him. Whence, and at what hour, did you part company from him?"

The English knight paused for a moment, and then replied,—"*For marvel that your reverence employs an grave a tone to enquire so light a question. I parted with the village where you call Halbert Glendinning some hour or twain after sunrise.*"

"And at what place, I pray you?" said the monk.

"In a deep ravine, where a fountain rises at the base of a huge rock; an earth-born Titan, which heave up its gray head, even as——"

"Spare us farther description," said the Sub-Prior; "we know the spot. But that youth hath not since been heard of, and it will fall on you to account for him."

"My bairn! my bairn!" exclaimed Dame Glendinning. "Yea, holy father, make the villain account for my bairn!"

"I swear, good woman, by bread and by water, which are the props of our life——"

"Swear by wine and wastel-bread, for these are the props of thy life, thou greedy Southron!" said Dame Glendinning;—"a base belly-god, to come here to eat the best, and practise on our lives that give it to him!"

"I tell thee, woman," said Sir Pierce Shafton, "I did but go with thy son to the hunting."

"A black hunting it has been to him, poor bairn," replied Tibb; "and now I said it was proved since I first saw the false Southron spout of thee. Little good comes of a Pierce's hunting, from Chevy Chase till now."

"Be silent, woman," said the Sub-Prior, "and rail not upon the English knight; we do not yet know of any thing beyond suspicion."

"We will have his heart's blood!" said Dame Glendinning; and, seconded by the faithful Tibbie, she made such a sudden onslaught on the unlucky Euphuist, as must have terminated in something serious, had not the monk, aided by Mysie Happer, interposed to protect him from their fury. Edward had left the apartment the instant the disturbance broke out, and now entered, sword in hand, followed by Martin and Jasper, the one having a hunting spear in his hand, the other a cross-bow.

"Keep the door," he said to his two attendants; "shoot him or stab him without mercy, should he attempt to break forth; if he offers an escape, by Heaven he shall die!"

"How now, Edward," said the Sub-Prior; "how is this that you so far forget yourself? meditating violence to a guest, and in my presence, who represent your liege lord?"

Edward stepped forward with his drawn sword in his hand. "Pardon me, reverend father," he said, "but in this matter the voice of nature speaks louder and stronger than yours. I turn my sword's point against this proud man, and I demand of him the blood of my brother—the blood of my father's son—of the heir of our name! If he denies to give me a true account of him, he shall not deny me vengeance."

Embarrassed as he was, Sir Pierce Shafton showed no personal fear. "Put up thy sword," he said, "young man; not in the same day does Pierce Shafton contend with two peasants."

"Hear him! he confesses the deed, holy father," said Edward.

"Be patient, my son," said the Sub-Prior, endeavouring to soothe the feelings which he could not otherwise control; "the patient—thou wilt attain the ends of justice better through my means than thine own violence.—And you, woman, be silent—Tibb, remove your weapons and Mary Avenel."

While Tibb, with the assistance of the other females of the household, bore the poor mother

and Mary Avenel into separate apartments, and while Edward, still keeping his sword in his hand, hastily traversed the room, as if to prevent the possibility of Sir Pierce Shafton's escape, the Sub-Prior insisted upon knowing from the perplexed knight the particulars which he knew respecting Halbert Glendinning. His situation became extremely embarrassing, for what he might with safety have told of the issue of their combat was so revealing to his pride, that he could not bring himself to enter into the detail; and of Halbert's actual fate he knew, as the reader is well aware, absolutely nothing.

The father in the meanwhile pressed him with remonstrances, and prayed him to observe, he would greatly prejudice himself by declining to give a full account of the transactions of the day. "You cannot deny," he said, "that yesterday you seemed to take the most violent offence at this unfortunate youth; and that you suppressed your resentment so suddenly as to impress us all with surprise. Last night you proposed to him this day's hunting party, and you set out together by break of day. You parted, you said, at the fountain near the rock, about an hour or twain after sunrise, and it appears that before you parted you had been at strife together."

"I said not so," replied the knight. "Here is a coil indeed about the absence of a rustical houseman, who, I dare say, hath gone off (if he be gone) to join the next rascally band of freebooters! Ye ask me, a knight of the Pierce's lineage, to account for such an insignificant fugitive, and I answer,—let me know the price of his head, and I will pay it to your convent-treasurer."

"You admit, then, that you have slain my brother!" said Edward, interfering once more; "I will presently show you at what price we Scots rate the lives of our friends."

"Peace, Edward, peace—I entreat—I command thee," said the Sub-Prior. "And you, Sir Knight, think better of us than to suppose you may spend Scottish blood, and reckon for it as for wine spilt in a drunken revel. This youth was no bondsman—thou well knowest, that in thine own land thou hadst not dared to lift thy sword against the meanest subject of England, but her laws would have called thee to answer for the deed. Do not hope it will be otherwise here, for you will but deceive yourself."

"You drive me beyond my patience," said the Euphuist, "even as the over-driven ox is urged into madness!—What can I tell you of a young fellow whom I have not seen since the second hour after sunrise?"

"But can you explain in what circumstances you parted with him?" said the monk.

"What are the circumstances, in the devil's name, which you desire should be explained?—for although I protest against this constraint as alike unworthy and inhospitable, yet would I willingly end this fray, provided that by words it may be ended," said the knight.

"If these end it not," said Edward, "blows shall, and that full speedily."

"Peace, impatient boy!" said the Sub-Prior; "and do you, Sir Pierce Shafton, acquaint me why the ground is bloody by the verge of the fountain in Cortinax-shan; where, as you say yourself, you parted from Halbert Glendinning?"

Resolute not to avow his defeat if possibly he could avoid it, the knight answered in a haughty tone, that he supposed it was no unusual thing to find the turf bloody where hunters had slain a deer.

"And did you bury your game as well as kill it?" said the monk. "We must know from you who is the tenant of that grave, that newly-made grave, beside the very fountain whose margin is so deeply crimsoned with blood!—Thou seest thou canst not evade me; therefore be ingenuous, and tell us the fate of this unhappy youth, whose body is doubtless lying under that bloody turf."

"If it be," said Sir Pierce, "they must have buried him alive; for I swear to thee, reverend father, that this rustic juvenal parted from me in perfect health. Let the grave be searched, and if his body be found, then deal with me as ye list."

"It is not my sphere to determine thy fate, Sir Knight, but that of the Lord Abbot, and the right reverend Chapter. It is but my duty to collect such information as may best possess their wisdom with the matters which have chanced."

"Might I presume so far, reverend father," said the knight, "I should wish to know the author and evidence of all these suspicions, so unfoundedly urged against me?"

"It is soon told," said the Sub-Prior; "nor do I wish to disguise it, if it can avail you in your defence. This maiden, Mary Avenel, apprehending that you nourished malice against her foster-brother under a friendly brow, did advisedly send up the old man, Martin Tacket, to follow your footsteps and to prevent mischief. But it seems that your evil passions had outrun precautions; for when he came to the spot, guided by your footsteps upon the dew, he found but the bloody turf and the new covered grave; and after long and vain search through the wilds after Halbert and yourself, he brought back the sorrowful news to her who had sent him."

"Saw he not my doublet, I pray you?" said Sir Pierce; "for when I came to myself, I found that I was wrapped in my cloak, but without my under garment, as your reverence may observe."

So saying, he opened his cloak, forgetting, with his characteristic inconsistency, that he showed his shirt stained with blood.

"How! cruel man," said the monk, when he observed this confirmation of his suspicions; "wilt thou deny the guilt, even while thou bearest on thy person the blood thou hast shed?—Wilt thou longer deny that thy rash hand has robbed a mother of a son, our community of a vassal, the Queen of Scotland of a liege subject? and what canst thou expect, but that, at the least, we deliver thee up to England, as underserving our farther protection?"

"By the Saints!" said the knight, now driven to extremity, "if this blood be the witness against me, it is but rebel blood, since this morning at sunrise it flowed within my own veins."

"How were that possible, Sir Pierce Shafton," said the monk, "since I see no wound from whence it can have flowed?"

"That," said the knight, "is the most mysterious part of the transaction.—See here!"

So saying, he undid his shirt collar, and, opening his breast, showed the spot through which Halbert's sword had passed, but already clottered, and bearing the appearance of a wound lately healed.

"This exhausts my patience, Sir Knight," said

the Sub-Prior, "and is adding insult to violence and injury. Do you hold me for a child or an idiot, that you pretend to make me believe that the fresh blood with which your shirt is stained, flowed from a wound which has been healed for weeks or months? Unhappy mocker, thinkest thou these to blind us? Too well do we know that it is the blood of your victim, wrestling with you in the desperate and mortal struggle, which has thus dyed your apparel."

The knight, after a moment's recollection, said in reply, "I will be open with you, my father—bid these men stand out of ear-shot, and I will tell you all I know of this mysterious business; and muse not, good father, though it may pass thy wit to expound it, for I avouch to you it is too dark for mine own."

The monk commanded Edward and the two men to withdraw, assuring the former that his conference with the prisoner should be brief, and giving him permission to keep watch at the door of the apartment; without which allowance he might, perhaps, have had some difficulty in procuring his absence. Edward had no sooner left the chamber, than he despatched messengers to one or two families of the Halldome, with whose sons his brother and he sometimes associated, to tell them that Halbert Glendinning had been murdered by an Englishman, and to require them to repair to the Tower of Glendearg without delay. The duty of revenge in such cases was held so sacred, that he had no reason to doubt they would instantly come with such assistance as would ensure the detention of the prisoner. He then locked the doors of the tower, both inner and outer, and also the gate of the court-yard. Having taken these precautions, he made a hasty visit to the females of the family, exhausting himself in efforts to console them, and in protestations that he would have vengeance for his murdered brother.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Now, by Our Lady, Sheriff, 'tis hard reckoning.

That I, with every odds of birth and bearing,
Should be detain'd here for the casual death
Of a wild forester, whose utmost having
Is but the braken buckie of the belt
In which he steels his hedge-knife.

Old Play.

WHILE Edward was making preparations for securing and punishing the supposed murderer of his brother, with an intense thirst for vengeance, which had not hitherto shown itself as part of his character, Sir Pierce Shafton made such communications as it pleased him to the Sub-Prior, who listened with great attention, though the knight's narrative was none of the clearest, especially as his self-demonst led him to conceal or abridge the details which were necessary to render it intelligible.

"You are to know," he said, "reverend father, that this rustic juvenal having chosen to offend me, in the presence of your venerable Superior, yourself, and other excellent and worthy persons, besides the damsel Mary Avenel, whom I term my Discretion in all honour and kindness, a ghastly insult rendered yet more intolerable by the time and place, my just resentment did at gain the mastery

over my discretion, that I resolved to allow him the privileges of an equal, and to indulge him with the combat."

"But, Sir Knight," said the Sub-Prior, "you still leave two matters very obscure. First, why the token be presented to you gave you so much offence, as I with others witnessed; and then again, how the youth, whom you then met for the first, or, at least, the second time, knew so much of your history as enabled him so greatly to move you."

The knight coloured very deeply.

"For your first query," he said, "most reverend father, we will, if you please, pretermitt it as nothing essential to the matter in hand; and for the second—I protest to you that I know as little of his means of knowledge as you do, and that I am well-nigh persuaded he deals with Sathanas, of which more anon.—Well, sir.—In the evening, I failed not to veil my purpose with a pleasant brow, as is the custom amongst us martialists, who never display the bloody colours of defiance in our countenance until our hand is armed to fight under them. I amused the fair Discretion with some canzonettes, and other toys, which could not but be ravishing to her inexperienced ears. I arose in the morning, and met my antagonist, who, to say truth, for an inexperienced villagio, comported himself as stoutly as I could have desired.—So, coming to the encounter, reverend sir, I did try his mettle with some half-a-dozen of downright passes, with any one of which I could have been through his body, only that I was loth to take so fatal an advantage, but rather, mixing mercy with my just indignation, studied to inflict upon him some flesh-wound of no very fatal quality. But, sir, in the midst of my clemency, he, being instigated, I think, by the devil, did follow up his first offence, with some insult of the same nature. Whereupon being eager to punish him, I made an estramason, and my foot slipping at the same time,—not from any fault of fence on my part, or any advantage of skill on his, but the devil having, as I said, taken up the matter in hand, and the grass being slippery,—ere I recovered my position I encountered his sword, which he had advanced, with my undefended person, so that, as I think, I was in some sort run through the body. My juvenal, being beyond measure appalled at his own unexpected and unmerited success in this strange encounter, takes the flight and leaves me there, and I fall into a dead swoon for the lack of the blood I had lost so foolishly—and when I awake, as from a sound sleep, I find myself lying, as it like you, wrapt up in my cloak at the foot of one of the birch-trees which stand together in a clump near to this place. I feel my limbs, and experience little pain, but much weakness—I put my hand to the wound—it was whole and skinned over as you now see it—I rise and come hither; and in these words you have my whole day's story."

"I can only reply to so strange a tale," answered the monk, "that it is scarcely possible that Sir Piercie Shadock can expect me to credit it. Here is a quarrel, the cause of which you conceal,—a wound received in the morning, of which there is no recent appearance at sunset,—a grave filled up, in which no body is deposited,—the vanquished found alive and well,—the victor departed no man knew whither. These things, Sir Knight, being

not so well together, that I should receive them as gospel."

"Reverend father," answered Sir Piercie Shadock, "I pray you in the first place to observe, that if I offer peaceful and civil justification of that which I have already avowed to be true, I do so only in devout deference to your dress and to your order, protesting, that to any other opposite, saving a man of religion, a lady, or my liege prince, I would not deign to support that which I had once attested, otherwise than with the point of my good sword. And so much being premised, I have to add, that I can but gage my honour as a gentleman, and my faith as a catholic Christian, that the things which I have described to you have happened to me as I have described them, and not otherwise."

"It is a deep assertion, Sir Knight," answered the Sub-Prior; "yet, bethink you, it is only an assertion, and that no reason can be alleged why things should be believed which are so contrary to reason. Let me pray you to say whether the grave, which has been seen at your place of combat, was open or closed when your encounter took place?"

"Reverend father," said the knight, "I will veil from you nothing, but shew you each secret of my bosom; even as the pure fountain revealeth the smallest pebble which graces the sand at the bottom of its crystal mirror; and as—"

"Speak in plain terms, for the love of heaven," said the monk; "these holiday phrases belong not to solemn affairs.—Was the grave open when the conflict began?"

"It was," answered the knight, "I acknowledge it; even as he that acknowledgeth—"

"Nay, I pray you, fair son, forbear these similitudes, and observe me. On yesterday at even no grave was found in that place, for old Martin chanced, contrary to his wont, to go thither in quest of a strayed sheep. At break of day, by your own confession, a grave was opened in that spot, and there a combat was fought—only one of the combatants appears, and he is covered with blood, and to all appearance woundless.—Here the knight made a gesture of impatience.—"Nay, fair son, hear me but one moment—the grave is closed and covered by the sod—what can we believe, but that it conceals the bloody corpse of the fallen duellist?"

"By Heaven, it cannot!" said the knight, "unless the juvenal hath slain himself, and buried himself, in order to place me in the predicament of his murderer."

"The grave shall doubtless be explored, and that by to-morrow's dawn," said the monk; "I will see it done with mine own eyes."

"But," said the prisoner, "I protest against all evidence which may arise from its contents, and do insist beforehand, that whatever may be found in that grave shall not prejudice me in my defence. I have been so haunted by diabolical deceptions in this matter, that what do I know but that the devil may assume the form of this ruined juvenal, in order to procure me further vexation?—I protest to you, holy father, it is my very thought that there is witchcraft in all that hath befallen me. Since I entered into this northern land, in which men say that sorceries do abound, I, who am held in awe and regard even by the prime gallants in the court of Kildare, have been here harassed and

taunted by a clod-treading clown. I, whom Vincentio Flaviola termed his nimblest and most agile disciple, was, to speak briefly, felled by a cow-boy, who knew no more of fence than is used at every country wake. I am run, as it seemed to me, through the body, with a very sufficient stoccase, and faint on the spot; and yet, when I recover, I find myself without either wound or wound, and lacking nothing of my apparel, saving my surrey-coloured doublet, slashed with satin, which I will pray may be inquired after, lest the devil, who transported me, should have dropped it in his passage among some of the trees or bushes—it being a choice and most fanciful piece of raiment, which I wore for the first time at the Queen's pageant in Southwark."

"Sir Knight," said the monk, "you do again go astray from this matter. I inquire of you respecting that which concerns the life of another man, and, it may be, touches your own also, and you answer me with a tale of an old doublet!"

"Old!" exclaimed the knight; "now, by the gods and saints, if there be a gallant at the British Court more fancifully considerate, and more considerately fanciful, more quaintly curious, and more curiously quaint, in frequent changes of all rich articles of vesture, becoming one who may be accoutred point-de-vie of a courtier, I will give you leave to term me a slave and a liar."

The monk thought, but did not say, that he had already required right to doubt the veracity of the Euphuist, considering the marvellous tale which he had told. Yet his own strange adventure, and that of Father Philip, rushed on his mind, and forbade his coming to any conclusion. He contented himself, therefore, with observing, that these were certainly strange incidents, and requested to know if Sir Piercie Shafton had any other reason for suspecting himself to be in a manner so particularly selected for the sport of sorcery and witchcraft.

"Sir Sub-Prior," said the Euphuist, "the most extraordinary circumstance remains behind, which alone, had I neither been boarded in dispute, nor felled in combat, nor wounded and cured in the space of a few hours, would nevertheless of itself, and without any other corroborative, have compelled me to believe myself the subject of some malevolent fascination. Reverend sir, it is not to your ears that men should tell tales of love and gallantry, nor is Sir Piercie Shafton one who, to any ears whatsoever, is wont to boast of his fair acceptance with the choice and prime beauties of the court; inasmuch that a lady, none of the least resplendent constellations which revolve in that hemisphere of honour, pleasure, and beauty, but whose name I here protestant, was wont to call me her Taciturnity. Nevertheless, truth must be spoken; and I cannot but allow, as the general report of the court, allowed in camps, and echoed back by city and country, that in the alacrity of the assent, the tender delicacy of the regard, the fastidiousness of the address, the adopting and pursuing of the fancy, the solemn close and the graceful fall-off, Piercie Shafton was accounted the only gallant of the time, and so well accepted amongst the choicer beauties of the age, that no silk-headed reveller of the presence-chamber, or plumed joustier of the tilt-yard, approached him as a bow's length in the ladies' regard, being the object which every well-born and generous juvenile slung his staff. Nevertheless, reverend sir, hav-

ing found in this rude place something which by blood and birth might be termed a lady, and being desirous to keep my gallant humour in exercise, as well as to shew my sworn devotion to the sex in general, I did shoot off some arrows of compliment at this Mary Avenel, turning her my Discretion, with other quaint and well-imagined courtesies, rather bestowed out of my bounty than warranted by her merit, or perchance like unto the boyish fowler, who, rather than not exercise his bird-piece, will shoot at crows or magpies for lack of better game—"

"Mary Avenel is much obliged by your notice," answered the monk; "but to what does all this detail of past and present gallantry conduct us?"

"Marry, to this conclusion," answered the knight; "that either this my Discretion, or I myself, am little less than bewitched; for, instead of receiving my assent with a gratified bow, answering my regard with a suppressed smile, accompanying my falling off or departure with a slight sigh—honours with which I protest to you the noblest dancers and proudest beauties in Feliciana have graced my poor services—she hath paid me as little and as cold regard as if I had been some hob-nailed clown of these bleak mountains! Nay, this very day, while I was in the act of kneeling at her feet to render her the succours of this pungent quintessence of purest spirit distilled by the fairest hands of the court of Feliciana, she pushed me from her with looks which savoured of repugnance, and, as I think, thrust at me with her foot as if to spurn me from her presence. These things, reverend father, are strange, portentous, unnatural, and befall not in the current of mortal affairs, but are symptomatic of sorcery and fascination. So that, having given to your reverence a perfect, simple, and plain account of all that I know concerning this matter, I leave it to your wisdom to solve what may be found soluble in the same, it being my purpose to-morrow, with the peep of dawn, to set forward towards Edinburgh."

"I grieve to be an interruption to your designs, Sir Knight," said the monk, "but that purpose of thine may hardly be fulfilled."

"How, reverend father!" said the knight, with an air of the utmost surprise; "if what you say respects my departure, understand that it must be, for I have so resolved it."

"Sir Knight," reiterated the Sub-Prior, "I must once more repeat, this *cannot* be, until the Abbot's pleasure be known in the matter."

"Reverend sir," said the knight, drawing himself up with great dignity, "I desire my hearty and thankful commendations to the Abbot; but in this matter I have nothing to do with his reverend pleasure, designing only to consult my own."

"Pardon me," said the Sub-Prior; "the Lord Abbot hath in this matter a voice potent!"

Sir Piercie Shafton's colour began to rise—"I marvel," he said, "to hear your reverence talk thus—What! wilt thou, for the imagined death of a rude low-born frampier and wrangler, venture to impinge upon the liberty of the kinsmen of the house of Percie?"

"Sir Knight," returned the Sub-Prior, smiling, "your high lineage and your kneeling anger will avail you nothing in this matter—You shall not come here to seek a challenge, and then spill our blood as if it were water."

"I tell you," said the knight, "once more, as I have told you already, that there was no blood spilled but mine own!"

"That remains to be proved," replied the Sub-Prior; "we of the community of Saint Mary's of Kennaquhair, use not to take fairy tales in exchange for the lives of our liege vassals."

"We of the house of Pierce," answered Shaf-ton, "brook neither threats nor restraint — I say I will travel to-morrow, happen what may!"

"And I," answered the Sub-Prior, in the same tone of determination, "say that I will break your journey, come what may!"

"Who shall gainsay me," said the knight, "if I make my way by force!"

"You will judge wisely to think ere you make such an attempt," answered the monk, with composure; "there are men enough in the Halidome to vindicate its rights over those who dare to infringe them."

"My cousin of Northumberland will know how to revenge this usage to a beloved kinsman so near to his blood," said the Englishman.

"The Lord Abbot will know how to protect the rights of his territory, both with the temporal and spiritual sword," said the monk. "Besides, consider, were we to send you to your kinsman at Alnwick or Warkworth to-morrow, he dare do nothing but transmit you in fetters to the Queen of England. Bethink, Sir Knight, that you stand on slippery ground, and will act most wisely in reconciling yourself to be a prisoner in this place, until the Abbot shall decide the matter. There are armed men enow to countervail all your efforts at escape. Let patience and resignation, therefore, arm you to a necessary submission."

So saying, he clapped his hands, and called aloud. Edward entered, accompanied by two young men who had already joined him, and were well armed.

"Edward," said the Sub-Prior, "you will supply the English knight here in this spence with suitable food and accommodation for the night, treating him with as much kindness as if nothing had happened between you. But you will place a sufficient guard, and look carefully that he make not his escape. Should he attempt to break forth, resist him to the death; but in no other case harm a hair of his head, as you shall be answerable."

Edward Glendinning replied, — "That I may obey your commands, reverend sir, I will not again offer myself to this person's presence; for shame it were to me to break the peace of the Halidome, but not less shame to leave my brother's death unavenged."

As he spoke, his lip grew livid, the blood forsook his cheek, and he was about to leave the apartment, when the Sub-Prior recalled him and said in a solemn tone, — "Edward, I have known you from infancy — I have done what lay within my reach to be of use to you — I say nothing of what you owe to me as the representative of your spiritual Superior — I say nothing of the duty from the vassal to the Sub-Prior — But Father Eustace expects from the pupil whom he has nurtured — he expects from Edward Glendinning, that he will not by any deed of sudden violence, however justified in his own mind by the provocation, break through the respect due to public justice, or that which he has an especial right to claim from him."

"Fear nothing, my reverend father, for so in

an hundred senses may I well term you," said the young man; "fear not, I would say, that I will in any thing diminish the respect I owe to the venerable community by whom we have so long been protected, far less that I will do aught which can be personally less than respectful to you. But the blood of my brother must not cry for vengeance in vain — your reverence knows our Border creed."

"Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord, and I will requite it," answered the monk. "The heathenish custom of deadly feud which prevails in this land, through which each man seeks vengeance at his own hand when the death of a friend or kinsman has chanced, hath already defused our vales with the blood of Scottish men, spilled by the hands of countrymen and kindred. It were endless to count up the fatal results. On the Eastern Border, the Homes are at feud with the Swintons and Cockburns; in our Middle Marches, the Scotts and Kerrs have spilled as much brave blood in domestic feud as might have fought a pitched field in England, could they have but forgiven and forgotten a casual rencounter that placed their names in opposition to each other. On the west frontier, the Johnstones are at war with the Maxwells, the Jardines with the Bells, drawing with them the flower of the country, which should place their broads as a bulwark against England, into private and bloody warfare, of which it is the only end to waste and impair the forces of the country, already divided in itself. Do not, my dear son Edward, permit this bloody prejudice to master your mind. I cannot ask you to think of the crime supposed as if the blood spilled had been less dear to you — Alas! I know that is impossible. But I do require you, in proportion to your interest in the supposed sufferer, (for as yet the whole is matter of supposition,) to bear of your mind the evidence on which the guilt of the accused person must be tried. He hath spoken with me, and I confess his tale is so extraordinary, that I should have, without a moment's hesitation, rejected it as incredible, but that an affair which chanced to myself in this very glen — More of that another time — Suffice it for the present to say, that from what I have myself experienced, I deem it possible, that, extraordinary as Sir Pierce Shaf-ton's story may seem, I hold it not utterly impossible."

"Father," said Edward Glendinning, when he saw that his preceptor paused, unwilling farther to explain upon what grounds he was inclined to give a certain degree of credit to Sir Pierce Shaf-ton's story, while he admitted it as improbable — "Father to me you have been in every sense. You know that my hand grasped more readily to the book than to the sword; and that I lacked utterly the ready and bold spirit which distinguished —" Here his voice faltered, and he paused for a moment, and then went on with resolution and rapidity — "I would say, that I was unequal to Halbert in promptitude of heart and of hand; but Halbert is gone, and I stand his representative, and that of my father — his successor in all his rights," (while he said this his eyes shot fire,) "and bound to assert and maintain them as he would have done — therefore I am a changed man, increased in courage as in my rights and pretensions. And, reverend father, respectfully, but plainly and firmly do I say, his blood, if it has been shed by this

man, shall be atoned—Halbert shall not sleep neglected in his lonely grave, as if with him the spirit of my father had ceased for ever. His blood flows in my veins, and while his has been poured forth unrequited, mine will permit me no rest. My poverty and meanness of rank shall not avail the lordly murderer. My calm nature and peaceful studies shall not be his protection. Even the obligations, holy father, which I acknowledge to you, shall not be his protection. I wait with patience the judgment of the Abbot and Chapter, for the slaughter of one of their most anciently descended vassals. If they do right to my brother's memory, it is well. But mark me, father, if they shall fail in rendering me that justice, I bear a heart and a hand which, though I love not such extremities, are capable of remedying such an error. He who takes up my brother's succession must avenge his death."

The monk perceived with surprise, that Edward, with his extreme diffidence, humility, and obedient assiduity, for such were his general characteristics, had still boiling in his veins the wild principles of those from whom he was descended, and by whom he was surrounded. His eyes sparkled, his frame was agitated, and the extremity of his desire of vengeance seemed to give a vehemence to his manner resembling the restlessness of joy.

"May God help us," said Father Eustace, "for, frail wretches as we are, we cannot help ourselves under sudden and strong temptation.—Edward, I will rely on your word that you do nothing rashly."

"That will I not," said Edward,—"that, my better than father, I surely will not. But the blood of my brother,—the Kears of my mother—and—and—and of Mary Avenel, shall not be shed in vain. I will not deceive you, father.—If this Pierce Shafton hath slain my brother, he dies, if the whole blood of the whole house of Pierce were in his veins."

There was a deep and solemn determination in the utterance of Edward Glendinning, expressive of a rooted resolution. The Sub-Prior sighed deeply, and for the moment yielded to circumstances, and urged the acquiescence of his pupil no farther. He commanded lights to be placed in the lower chamber, which for a time he paced in silence.

A thousand ideas, and even differing principles, debated with each other in his bosom. He greatly doubted the English knight's account of the duel, and of what had followed it. Yet the extraordinary and supernatural circumstances which had befallen the Sacristan and himself in that very glen, prevented him from being absolutely incredulous on the score of the wonderful wound and recovery of Sir Pierce Shafton, and prevented him from at once condemning as impossible that which was altogether improbable. Then he was at a loss how to control the fraternal affections of Edward, with respect to whom he felt something like the keeper of a wild animal, a lion's whelp or tiger's cub, which he has held under his command from infancy, but which, when grown to maturity, on some sudden provocation displays his fangs and talons, erects his crest, resumes his savage nature, and bids defiance at once to his keeper and to all mankind.

How to restrain and mitigate an ire which the example of the times rendered deadly

and inveterate, was sufficient cause of anxiety to Father Eustace. But he had also to consider the situation of his community, dishonoured and degraded by submitting to suffer the slaughter of a vassal to pass unavenged; a circumstance which of itself might in those difficult times have afforded pretext for a revolt among their wavering adherents, or, on the other hand, exposed the community to imminent danger, should they proceed against a subject of England of high degree, connected with the house of Northumberland, and other northern families of high rank, who, as they possessed the means, could not be supposed to lack inclination, to wreak upon the patrimony of Saint Mary of Kennaquhair, any violence which might be offered to their kinsman.

In either case, the Sub-Prior well knew that the ostensible cause of feud, insurrection, or incursion, being once afforded, the case would not be ruled either by reason or by evidence, and he groaned in spirit when, upon counting up the chances which arose in this ambiguous dilemma, he found he had only a choice of difficulties. He was a monk, but he felt also as a man, indignant at the supposed slaughter of young Glendinning by one skilful in all the practice of arms, in which the vassal of the Monastery was most likely to be deficient; and to aid the resentment which he felt for the loss of a youth whom he had known from infancy, came in full force the sense of dishonour arising to his community from passing over so gross an insult unavenged. Then the light in which it might be viewed by those who at present presided in the stormy Court of Scotland, attached as they were to the Reformation, and allied by common faith and common interest with Queen Elizabeth, was a formidable subject of apprehension. The Sub-Prior well knew how they tested after the revenues of the church, (to express it in the ordinary phrase of the religious of the time,) and how readily they would grasp at such a pretext for encroaching on those of Saint Mary's, as would be afforded by the suffering to pass unpunished the death of a native Scottishman by a Catholic Englishman, a rebel to Queen Elizabeth.

On the other hand, to deliver up to England, or, which was nearly the same thing, to the Scottish administration, an English knight leagued with the Pierce by kindred and political intrigue, a faithful follower of the Catholic Church, who had fled to the Halidome for protection, was, in the estimation of the Sub-Prior, an act most unworthy in itself and meriting the manipulation of Heaven, besides being, moreover, fraught with great temporal risk. If the government of Scotland was now almost entirely in the hands of the Protestant party, the Queen was still a Catholic, and there was no knowing when, amid the sudden changes which agitated that tumultuous country, she might find herself at the head of her own affairs, and able to protect those of her own faith. Then if the Court of England and its Queen were zealously Protestant, the northern counties, whose friendship or enmity were of most consequence in the first instance to the community of Saint Mary's, contained many Catholics, the heads of whom were able, and must be supposed willing, to avenge any injury suffered by Sir Pierce Shafton.

On either side, the Sub-Prior, thinking, according to his sense of duty, most anxiously for the safety

and welfare of his Monastery, saw the greatest risk of damage, blame, inroad, and confiscation. The only course on which he could determine, was to stand by the helm like a resolute pilot, watch every contingency, do his best to weather each reef and sheet, and commit the rest to heaven and his patrons.

As he left the apartment, the knight called after him, beseeching he would order his trunk-mails to be sent into his apartment, understanding he was to be guarded there for the night, as he wished to make some alteration in his apparel.

"Ay, ay," said the monk, muttering as he went up the winding stair, "carry hith his trumpery with all despatch. Alas! that man, with so many noble objects of pursuit, will amuse himself like a jackanape, with a laced jerkin and a cap and bells! — I must now to the melancholy work of consoling thee, which is well-nigh insupportable, a mother weeping for her first-born."

Advancing, after a gentle knock, into the apartment of the women, he found that Mary Avenel had retired to bed, extremely indisposed, and that Dame Glendinning and Tibb were indulging their sorrows by the side of a decaying fire, and by the light of a small iron lamp, or cruze, as it was termed. Poor Elspeth's apron was thrown over her head, and bitterly did she sob and weep for "her beautiful, her brave, — the very image of her dear Simon Glendinning, the stay of her widowhood and the support of her old age."

The faithful Tibb echoed her complaints, and more violently clamorous, made deep promises of revenge on Sir Pierce Shafton, "if there were a man left in the south who could draw a whinger, or a woman that could throw a rape." The presence of the Sub-Prior imposed silence on these clamours. He sat down by the unfortunate mother, and essayed, by such topics as his religion and reason suggested, to interrupt the current of Dame Glendinning's feelings; but the attempt was in vain. She listened, indeed, with some little interest, while he pledged his word and his influence with the Abbot, that the family which had lost their eldest, born by means of a guest received at his command, should experience particular protection at the hands of the community; and that the fief which belonged to Simon Glendinning should, with extended bounds and added privileges, be conferred on Edward.

But it was only for a very brief space that the mother's sobs were apparently softer, and her grief more mild. She soon blamed herself for casting a moment's thought upon world's gear while poor Halbert was lying stretched in his bloody shirt. The Sub-Prior was not more fortunate, when he promised that Halbert's body "should be removed to hallowed ground, and his soul secured by the prayers of the church in his behalf." Grief would have its natural course, and the voice of the comforter was wanted in vain.

• One Note K. *Peppery of the Sixteenth Century.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

He is as liberty, I have ventured for him!

if the law
Findhand condemn the for 't, some living wench,
Some honest-hearted maids will sing my dirge,
And tell to memory my death was noble,
Dying almost a martyr.

Two Note Known.

THE Sub-Prior of Saint Mary's, in taking his departure from the spence in which Sir Pierce Shafton was confined, and in which some preparations were made for his passing the night in the room which might be most conveniently guarded, left more than one perplexed person behind him. There was connected with this chamber, and opening into it, a small outshot, or projecting part of the building, occupied by a sleeping apartment, which upon ordinary occasions, was that of Mary Avenel, and which, in the unusual number of guests who had come to the tower on the former evening, had also accommodated Myrie Happer, the Miller's daughter; for anciently, as well as in the present day, a Scottish house was always rather too narrow and limited for the extent of the owner's hospitality, and some alight and contrivance was necessary, upon any unusual occasion, to ensure the accommodation of all the guests.

The fatal news of Halbert Glendinning's death had thrown all former arrangements into confusion. Mary Avenel, whose case required immediate attention, had been transported into the apartment hitherto occupied by Halbert and his brother, as the latter proposed to watch all night, in order to prevent the escape of the prisoner. Poor Myrie had been altogether overlooked, and had naturally enough betaken herself to the little apartment which she had hitherto occupied, ignorant that the spence, through which lay the only access to it, was to be the sleeping chamber of Sir Pierce Shafton. The measures taken for securing him there had been so sudden, that she was not aware of it, until she found that the other females had been removed from the spence by the Sub-Prior's direction, and having once missed the opportunity of retreating along with them, bashfulness, and the high respect which she was taught to bear to the monks, prevented her venturing forth alone, and intruding herself on the presence of Father Eustace, while in secret conference with the Southron. There appeared no remedy but to wait till their interview was over; and, as the door was thin, and did not shut very closely, she could hear every word that passed betwixt them.

It thus happened, that without any intended intrusion on her part, she became privy to the whole conversation of the Sub-Prior and the English knight, and could also observe from the window of her little retreat, that more than one of the young men summoned by Edward arrived successively at the tower. These circumstances led her to entertain most serious apprehension that the life of Sir Pierce Shafton was in great and instant peril.

Woman is naturally compassionate, and not less willingly so when youth and fair features are on the side of him who claims her sympathy. The handsome presence, elaborate dress and address of Sir Pierce Shafton, which had failed to make any favourable impression on the grave and lofty

clownishness of Mary Avenel, had completely dazzled and bewildered the poor Maid of the Mill. The knight had perceived this result, and, flattered by seeing that his merit was not universally underrated, he had bestowed on Mysie a good deal more of his courtesy than in his opinion her rank warranted. It was not cast away, but received with a devout sense of his condescension, and with gratitude for his personal notice, which, joined to her fears for his safety, and the natural tenderness of her disposition, began to make wild work in her heart.

"To be sure it was very wrong in him to slay Halbert Glendinning," (it was thus she argued the case with herself,) "but then he was a gentleman born, and a soldier, and so gentle and courteous withal, that she was sure the quarrel had been all of young Glendinning's own seeking; for it was well known, that both these lads were so taken up with that Mary Avenel, that they never looked at another lass in the Halldome, more than if they were of a different degree. And their Halbert's dress was as clownish as his manners were haughty; and this poor young gentleman, (who was habited like any prince,) banished from his own land, was first drawn into a quarrel by a rude brangler, and then persecuted and like to be put to death by his kin and allies."

Mysie wept bitterly at the thought, and then her heart rising against much cruelty and oppression to a defenceless stranger, who drossed with so much skill, and spoke with so much grace, she began to consider whether she could not render him some assistance in this extremity.

Her mind was now entirely altered from its original purpose. At first her only anxiety had been to find the means of escaping from the interior apartment, without being noticed by any one; but now she began to think that Heaven had placed her there for the safety and protection of the persecuted stranger. She was of a simple and affectionate, but at the same time an alert and enterprising character, possessing more than female strength of body, and more than female courage, though with feelings as capable of being bewildered with gallantry of dress and language, as a fine gentleman of any generation would have desired to exercise his talents upon. "I will save him," she thought, "that is the first thing to be resolved — and then I wonder what he will say to the poor Miller's maiden, that has done for him what all the dainty dames in London or Holyrood would have been afraid to venture upon."

Prudence began to pull her sleeve as she indulged speculations so hazardous, and hinted to her that the warmer Sir Pierce Shafton's gratitude might prove, it was the more likely to be fraught with danger to his benefactress. Alas! poor Prudence, thou mayest say with our moral teacher,

"I preach for ever, but I preach in vain."

The Miller's maiden, while you pour your warning into her unwilling bosom, has glanced her eye on the small mirror by which she has placed her little locks, and it returns to her a countenance and eyes, pretty and sparkling at all times, but ennobled at present with the energy of expression proper to those who have dared to form, and stand prepared to execute deeds of generous audacity.

Will these features — will these eyes, joined to

the benefit I am about to confer upon Sir Pierce Shafton, do nothing towards removing the distance of rank between us?"

Such was the question which female vanity asked of fancy; and though even fancy dared not answer in a ready affirmative, a middle conclusion was adopted — "Let me first succour the gallant youth, and trust to fortune for the rest."

Banishing, therefore, from her mind every thing that was personal to herself, the rash but generous girl turned her whole thoughts to the means of executing this enterprise.

The difficulties which interposed were of an ordinary nature. The vengeance of the men of that country, in cases of deadly feud, that is, in cases of a quarrel excited by the slaughter of any of their relations, was one of their most marked characteristics; and Edward, however gentle in other respects, was so fond of his brother, that there could be no doubt that he would be as signal in his revenge as the customs of the country authorized. There were to be passed the inner door of the apartment, the two gates of the tower itself, and the gate of the court-yard, ere the prisoner was at liberty; and then a guide and means of flight were to be provided, otherwise ultimate escape was impossible. But where the will of woman is strongly bent on the accomplishment of such a purpose, her wit is seldom baffled by difficulties, however embarrassing.

The Sub-Prior had not long left the apartment, ere Mysie had devised a scheme for Sir Pierce Shafton's freedom, daring, indeed, but likely to be successful, if dexterously conducted. It was necessary, however, that she should remain where she was till so late an hour, that all in the tower should have betaken themselves to repose, excepting those whose duty made them watchers. The interval she employed in observing the movements of the person in whose service she was thus boldly a volunteer.

She could hear Sir Pierce Shafton pace the floor to and fro, in reflection doubtless on his own untoward fate and precarious situation. By and by she heard him making a rustling among his trunks, which, agreeable to the order of the Sub-Prior, had been placed in the apartment to which he was confined, and which he was probably amidst more melancholy thoughts by examining and arranging. Then she could hear him resume his walk through the room, and, as if his spirits had been somewhat relieved and elevated by the survey of his wardrobe, she could distinguish that at one turn he had recited a sonnet, at another half whistled a galliard, and at the third hummed a saraband. At length she could understand that he extended himself on the temporary couch which had been allotted to him, after muttering his prayers hastily, and in a short time she concluded he must be fast asleep.

She employed the moments which intervened in considering her enterprise under every different aspect; and dangerous as it was, the steady review which she took of the various perils accompanying her purpose, furnished her with plausible devices for obviating them. Love and generous compassion, which give singly such powerful impulses to the female heart, were in this case united, and championed her to the last extremity of hazard.

It was an hour past midnight. All in the tower slept soundly but those who had undertaken to guard the English prisoner; or if sorrow and suffer-

ing drove sleep from the bed of Dame Glendinning and her foster-daughter, they were too much wrapt in their own griefs to attend to external sounds. The means of striking light were at hand in the small apartment, and thus the Miller's maiden was enabled to light and trim a small lamp. With a trembling step and throbbing heart, she undid the door which separated her from the apartment in which the Southron knight was confined, and almost flinched from her fixed purpose, when she found herself in the same room with the sleeping prisoner. She scarcely trusted herself to look upon him, as he lay wrapped in his cloak, and fast asleep upon the pallet bed, but turned her eyes away while she gently pulled his mantle with no more force than was just equal to awaken him. He moved not until she had twitched his cloak a second and a third time, and then at length looking up, was about to make an exclamation in the suddenness of his surprise.

Mysie's bashfulness was conquered by her fear. She placed her fingers on her lips, in token that he must observe the most strict silence, and then pointed to the door to intimate that it was watched.

Sir Piercie Shafton now collected himself, and sat upright on his couch. He gazed with surprise on the graceful figure of the young woman who stood before him; her well-formed person, her flowing hair, and the outline of her features, shewed dimly, and yet to advantage, by the partial and feeble light which she held in her hand. The romantic imagination of the gallant would soon have coined some compliment proper for the occasion, but Mysie left him not time.

"I come," she said, "to save your life, which is else in great peril—if you answer me, speak as low as you can, for they have sentinelled your door with armed men."

"Comeliest of millers' daughters," answered Sir Piercie, who by this time was sitting upright on his couch, "dread nothing for my safety. Credit me, that, as in very truth, I have not spilled the red puddle (which these villagios call the blood) of their most uncivil relation, so I am under no apprehension whatever for the issue of this restraint, seeing that it cannot but be harmless to me. Nonetheless, to thee, O most Molendinary beauty, I return the thanks which thy country may justly claim."

"Nay, but, Sir Knight," answered the maiden, in a whisper as low as it was tremulous, "I deserve no thanks, unless you will act by my counsel. Edward Glendinning hath sent for Daft of the Howlet-hirst, and young Ailie of Aikenshaw, and they are come with three men more, and with bow, and jack, and spear, and I heard them say to each other, and to Edward, as they alighted in the court, that they would have amends for the death of their kinsman, if the monk's owl should smoke for it—And the vassals are so wilful now, that the Abbot himself dare not control them, for fear they turn heretics, and refuse to pay their feu-duties."

"In faith," said Sir Piercie Shafton, "it may be a shrewd temptation, and perchance the monks may rid themselves of trouble and cumber, by handing me over the march to Sir John Foster or Lord Hamdon, the English wardens, and so make peace with their vassals and with England at once. Fairst Molinara, I will for once walk by thy side, and if thou dost contrive to extricate me from this vile mesh, I will so celebrate thy wit and beauty,

that the Baker's nymph of Raphael d'Urbino shall seem but a gipsy in comparison of my Molinara."

"I pray you, then, be silent," said the Miller's daughter; "for if your speech betrays that you are awake, my scheme fails utterly, and it is Heaven's mercy and Our Lady's that we are not already overheard and discovered."

"I am silent," replied the Southron, "even as the starless night—but yet—if this contrivance of thine should endanger thy safety, fair and no less kind than fair daniel, it were utterly unworthy of me to accept it at thy hand."

"Do not think of me," said Mysie, hastily; "I am safe—I will take thought for myself, if I once saw you out of this dangerous dwelling—if you would provide yourself with any part of your apparel or goods, lose no time."

The knight *did*, however, lose some time, ere he could settle in his own mind what to take and what to abandon of his wardrobe, each article of which seemed endeared to him by recollection of the feasts and revels at which it had been exhibited. For some little while Mysie left him to make his selections at leisure, for she herself had also some preparations to make for flight. But when, returning from the chamber into which she had retired, with a small bundle in her hand, she found him still indecisive, she insisted in plain terms, that he should either make up his baggage for the enterprise, or give it up entirely. Thus urged, the disconsolate knight hastily made up a few clothes into a bundle, regarded his trunk-mails with a mute expression of parting sorrow, and intimated his readiness to wait upon his kind guide.

She led the way to the door of the apartment, having first carefully extinguished her lamp, and motioning to the knight to stand close behind her, tapped once or twice at the door. She was at length answered by Edward Glendinning, who demanded to know who knocked within, and what was desired.

"Speak low," said Mysie Happer, "or you will awaken the English knight. It is I, Mysie Happer, who knock—I wish to get out—you have locked me up—agd I was obliged to wait till the Southron slept."

"Locked you up?" replied Edward, in surprise.

"Yes," answered the Miller's daughter, "you have locked me up into this room—I was in Mary Avenel's sleeping apartment."

"And can you not remain there till morning," replied Edward, "since it has so chanced?"

"What?" said the Miller's daughter, in a tone of offended delicacy, "I remain here a moment longer than I can get out without discovery!—I would not, for all the Halidome of St Mary's, remain a minute longer in the neighbourhood of a man's apartment than I can help it!—For whom, or for what do you hold me? I promise you, my father's daughter has been better brought up than to put in peril her good name."

"Come forth then, and get to thy chamber in silence," said Edward.

So saying, he undid the bolt. The staircase without was in utter darkness, as Mysie had before ascertained. So soon as she stepped out, she took hold of Edward as if to support herself, thus interposing her person betwixt him and Sir Piercie Shafton, by whom she was closely followed. Time screened from observation, the Englishman slipped past on

up, and in silence, while the damsel complained to Edward that she wanted a light.

"I cannot get you a light," said he, "for I cannot leave this post; but there is a fire below."

"I will sit below till morning," said the Maid of the Mill; and, tripping down stairs, heard Edward bolt and bar the door of the new tenanted apartment with vain caution.

At the foot of the stair which she descended, she found the object of her care waiting her farther directions. She recommended to him the most absolute silence, which, for once in his life, he seemed not unwilling to observe, conducted him with as much caution as if he were walking on cracked ice, to a dark recess, used for depositing wood, and instructed him to enconce himself behind the logs. She herself lighted her lamp once more at the kitchen fire, and took her distaff and spindle, that she might not seem to be unemployed, in case any one came into the apartment. From time to time, however, she stole towards the window on tiptoe, to catch the first glance of the dawn, for the farther prosecution of her adventurous project. At length she saw, to her great joy, the first peep of the morning brighten upon the gray clouds of the east, and, clapping her hands together, thanked Our Lady for the sight, and implored protection during the remainder of her enterprise. Ere she had finished her prayer, she started at feeling a man's arm across her shoulder, while a rough voice spoke in her ear—"What! meneful Mysie of the Mill so soon at her prayers!—now, benison on the bonny eyes that open so early!—I'll have a kiss for good morrow's sake."

Dan of the Howlet-hirst, for he was the gallant who paid Mysie this compliment, suited the action with the word, and the action, as is usual in such cases of rustic gallantry, was rewarded with a cuff, which Dan received as a fine gentleman receives a tap with a fan, but which, delivered by the energetic arm of the Miller's maiden, would have certainly astonished a less robust gallant.

"How now, Sir Coxcomb!" said she, "and must you be away from your guard over the English knight, to plague quiet folk with your horse-tricks!"

"Truly you are mistaken, pretty Mysie," said the clown, "for I have not yet relieved Edward at his post; and were it not a shame to let him stay any longer, by my faith, I could find it in my heart not to quit you these two hours."

"Oh, you have hours and hours enough to see any one," said Mysie; "but you must think of the distress of the household even now, and get Edward to sleep for a while, for he has kept watch this whole night."

"I will have another kiss first," answered Dan of the Howlet-hirst.

But Mysie was now on her guard, and, conscious of the vicinity of the wood-hole, offered such strenuous resistance, that the swain cursed the nymph's bad humour with very unpoetical phrases and emphasis, and ran up stairs to relieve the guard of his comrade. Stealing to the door, she heard the new sentinel hold a brief conversation with Edward, after which the latter withdrew, and the former entered upon the duties of his watch.

Mysie suffered him to walk there a little while unmolested, until the dawning became more general, by which time she supposed he might have

digested her coyness, and then presenting herself before the watchful sentinel, demanded of him "the keys of the outer tower, and of the court-yard gate."

"And for what purpose?" answered the wanderer.

"To milk the cows, and drive them out to their pasture," said Mysie; "you would not have the poor beasts kept in the byre a' morning, and the family in such distress, that there is na ane fit to do a turn but the byre-woman and myself!"

"And where is the byre-woman?" said Dan.

"Sitting with me in the kitchen, in case these distressed folks want any thing."

"There are the keys, then, Mysie Dorts," said the sentinel.

"Many thanks, Dan Ne'er-do-weel," answered the Maid of the Mill, and escaped down stairs in a moment.

To hasten to the wood-hole, and there to robe the English knight, in a short-gown and petticoat, which she had provided for the purpose, was the work of another moment. She then undid the gates of the tower, and made towards the byre, or cow-house, which stood in one corner of the court-yard. Sir Pierce Shafton remonstrated against the delay, which this would occasion.

"Fair and generous Molinara," he said, "had we not better undo the outward gate, and make the best of our way hence, even like a pair of sea-mews who make towards shelter of the rocks as the storm waxes high!"

"We must drive out the cows first," said Mysie, "for a sin it were to spoil the poor widow's cattle, both for her sake and the poor beasts' own; and I have no mind any one shall leave the tower in a hurry to follow us. Besides, you must have your horse, for you will need a fleet one ere all be done."

So saying, she locked and double-locked both the inward and outward door of the tower, proceeded to the cow-house, turned out the cattle, and, giving the knight his own horse to lead, drove them before her out at the court-yard gate, intending to return for her own palfrey. But the noise attending the first operation caught the wakeful attention of Edward, who, starting to the battison, called to know what the matter was.

Mysie answered with great readiness, that "she was driving out the cows, for that they would be spoiled for want of looking to."

"I thank thee, kind maiden," said Edward—"and yet," he added, after a moment's pause, "what damsel is that thou hast with thee?"

Mysie was about to answer, when Sir Pierce Shafton, who apparently did not desire that the great work of his liberation should be executed without the interposition of his own ingenuity, exclaimed from beneath, "I say she, O most beautiful juvenile, under whose charge are placed the milky mothers of the herd."

"Hell and darkness!" exclaimed Edward, in a transport of fury and astonishment, "it is Pierce Shafton—What! treason! treason!—ho!—Dan—Jasper—Martin—the villain escapes!"

"To horse! to horse!" cried Mysie, and in an instant mounted behind the knight, who was already in the saddle.

Edward caught up a cross-bow, and let fly a bolt, which whistled so near Mysie's ear, that she called to her companion,—"Spar—spar, Sir Knight!"

the next will not miss us.—Had it been Halbert instead of Edward who bent that bow, we had been dead."

The knight pressed his horse, which dashed past the cows, and down the knoll on which the tower was situated. Then taking the road down the valley, the gallant animal, reckless of its double burden, soon conveyed them out of hearing of the tumult and alarm with which their departure filled the Tower of Glendearg.

Thus it strangely happened, that two men were flying in different directions at the same time, each accused of being the other's murderer.

CHAPTER XXIX.

—Sure he cannot
Be so unmanly as to leave me here;
If he do, male will set as easily
Trust men again.

The Two Noble Kinsmen.

THE knight continued to keep the good horse at a pace as quick as the road permitted, until they had cleared the valley of Glendearg, and entered upon the broad dale of the Tweed, which now rolled before them in crystal beauty, displaying on its opposite bank the huge gray Monastery of St Mary's, whose towers and pinnacles were scarce yet touched by the newly-risen sun, so deeply the edifice lies shrouded under the mountains which rise to the southward.

Turning to the left, the knight continued his road down the northern bank of the river, until they arrived nearly opposite to the weir, or dam-dike, where Father Philip concluded his extraordinary aquatic excursion.

Sir Pierce Shafton, whose brain seldom admitted more than one idea at a time, had hitherto pushed forward without very distinctly considering where he was going. But the sight of the Monastery so near to him, reminded him that he was still on dangerous ground, and that he must necessarily provide for his safety by choosing some settled plan of escape. The situation of his guide and deliverer also occurred to him, for he was far from being either selfish or ungrateful. He listened, and discovered that the Miller's daughter was sobbing and weeping bitterly as she rested her head on his shoulder.

"What ails thee," he said, "my generous Molinara?—in whose sight thus Pierce Shafton can do which may show his gratitude to his deliverer?" Myrie pointed with her finger across the river, but continued not to turn her eyes in that direction. "Nay, but speak plain, most generous dame!" said the knight, who, for once, was puzzled as much as his own elegance of speech was wont to puzzle others, "for I swear to you that I comprehend nought by the extension of thy right."

"Tender is my father's house," said Myrie, in a voice interrupted by the increased burst of her sorrow.

"And I was carrying thee discourteously to a distance from thy habitation!" said Shafton, imagining he had found out the source of her grief.

"We were the hour that Pierce Shafton, in attention to his own safety, neglected the accompaniment of my father, far less of his most be-

lieved liberatrix! Dismount, then, O loyal Molinara, unless thou wouldst rather that I should transport thee on horseback to the house of thy molendinary father, which, if thou sayest the word, I am prompt to do, defying all dangers which may arise to me personally, whether by monk or miller."

Myrie suppressed her sob, and with considerable difficulty smothered her desire to alight, and take her fortune by herself. Sir Pierce Shafton, too devoted a squire of dames to consider the most lowly as exempted from a respectful attention, independent of the claims which the Miller's maiden possessed over him, dismounted instantly from his horse, and received in his arms the poor girl, who still wept bitterly, and, when placed on the ground, seemed scarce able to support herself, or at least still clung, though, as it appeared, unconsciously, to the support he had afforded. He carried her to a weeping birch tree, which grew on the grassward bank around which the road winded, and, placing her on the ground beneath it, exhorted her to compose herself. A strong touch of natural feeling struggled with, and half overcame, his acquired affectation, while he said, "Credit me, most generous dame, the service you have done to Pierce Shafton he would have deemed too dearly bought, had he foreseen it was to cost you these tears and sighs. Shew me the cause of your grief, and if I can do ought to remove it, believe that the rights you have acquired over me will make your commands sacred as those of an empress. Speak, then, fair Molinara, and command him whom fortune hath rendered at once your debtor and your champion. What are your orders?"

"Only that you will fly and save yourself," said Myrie, mustering up her utmost efforts to utter these few words.

"Yet," said the knight, "let me not leave you without some token of remembrance." Myrie would have said there needed none, and most truly would she have spoken, could she have spoken for weeping. "Pierce Shafton is poor," he continued, "but let this chain testify he is not ungrateful to his deliverer."

He took from his neck the rich chain and medallion we have formerly mentioned, and put it into the powerless hand of the poor maiden, who neither received nor rejected it, but, occupied with more intense feelings, seemed scarce aware of what he was doing.

"We shall meet again," said Sir Pierce Shafton, "at least I trust so; meanwhile, weep no more, fair Molinara, an thou lovest me."

The phrase of conjuration was but used as an ordinary commonplace expression of the time, but bore a deeper sense to poor Myrie's ear. She dried her tears; and when the knight, in all kind and chivalrous courtesy, stooped to embrace her at their parting, she rose hubbly up to receive the proffered honour in a posture of more deference, and meekly and gratefully accepted the offered salute. Sir Pierce Shafton mounted his horse, and began to ride off, but curiosity, or perhaps a stronger feeling, soon induced him to look back, when he beheld the Miller's daughter standing still motionless on the spot where they had parted; her eyes turned after him, and the unheeded chain hanging from her hand.

It was at this moment that a glimpse of the real state of Mysie's affections, and of the motive from which she had acted in the whole matter, glanced on Sir Pierce Shafton's mind. The gallants of that age, disinterested, aspiring, and lofty-minded even in their coxcombry, were strangers to those degrading and mischievous pursuits which are usually termed low amours. They did not "chase the humble maidens of the plain," or degrade their own rank, to deprive rural innocence of peace and virtue. It followed, of course, that as conquests in this class were no part of their ambition, they were in most cases totally overlooked and unsuspected, soft unimproved, as a modern would call it, where, as on the present occasion, they were casually made. The companion of Astropele, and flower of the tilt-yard of Felician, had no more idea that his graces and good parts could attach the love of Mysie Happer, than a first-rate beauty in the boxes dreams of the fatal wound which her charms may inflict on some attorney's romantic apprentice in the pit. I suppose, in any ordinary case, the pride of rank and distinction would have pronounced on the humble admirer the doom which Beau Fielding denounced against the whole female world, "Let them look and die;" but the obligations under which lay to the enamoured maiden, miller's daughter as she was, precluded the possibility of Sir Pierce's treating the matter *en cavalier*, and, much embarrassed, yet a little flattered at the same time, he rode back to try what could be done for the damsel's relief.

The innate modesty of poor Mysie could not prevent her shewing too obvious signs of joy at Sir Pierce Shafton's return. She was betrayed by the sparkle of the rekindling eye, and a caress which, however timidly bestowed, she could not help giving to the neck of the horse, which brought back the beloved rider.

"What farther can I do for you, kind Molinara?" said Sir Pierce Shafton, himself hesitating and blushing; for, to the grace of Queen Beas's age be it spoken, her courtiers wore more iron on their breasts than brass on their foreheads, and even amid their vanities preserved still the decaying spirit of chivalry, which inspired of yore the very gentle Knight of Chaucer,

"Who in his port was modest as a maid."

Mysie blushed deeply, with her eyes fixed off the ground, and Sir Pierce proceeded in the same tone of embarrassed kindness. "Are you afraid to return home alone, my kind Molinara?—would you that I should accompany you?"

"Alas!" said Mysie, looking up, and her cheek changing from scarlet to pale, "I have no home left."

"How! no home?" said Shafton; "says my generous Molinara she hath no home, when yonder stands the house of her father, and but a crystal stream between?"

"Alas!" answered the Miller's maiden, "I have no longer either home or father. He is a devoted servant to the Abbey—I have offended the Abbot, and if I return home my father will kill me."

"He dare not injure thee, by Heaven!" said Sir Pierce; "I swear to thee, by my honour and knightship, that the forces of my cousin of Northumberland shall lay the Minster so flat, that a horse shall not stumble as he rides over it, if they

should dare to injure a hair of your head! Therefore be hopeful and content, kind Mysinda, and know you have obliged one who can and will avenge the slightest wrong offered to you."

He sprung from his horse as he spoke, and, in the animation of his argument, grasped the willing hand of Mysie, (or Mysinda as he had now christened her.) He gazed too upon full black eyes, fixed upon his own with an expression which, however subdued by maidenly shame, it was impossible to mistake, on cheeks where something like hope began to restore the natural colour, and on two lips which, like double rosebuds, were kept a little apart by expectation, and showed within a line of teeth as white as pearl. All this was dangerous to look upon, and Sir Pierce Shafton, after repeating with less and less force his request that the fair Mysinda would allow him to carry her to her father's, ended by asking the fair Mysinda to go along with him—"At least," he added, "until I shall be able to conduct you to a place of safety."

Mysie Happer made no answer; but blushing scarlet betwixt joy and shame, mutely expressed her willingness to accompany the Southron Knight, by knitting her bundle closer, and preparing to resume her seat *en croupe*. "And what is your pleasure that I should do with this?" she said holding up the chain as if she had been for the first time aware that it was in her hand.

"Keep it, fairest Mysinda, for my sake," said the Knight.

"Not so, sir," answered Mysie, gravely; "the maidens of my country take no such gifts from their superiors, and I need no token to remind me of this morning."

Most earnestly and courteously did the Knight urge her acceptance of the proposed guard, but on this point Mysie was resolute; feeling, perhaps, that to accept of any thing bearing the appearance of reward, would be to place the service she had rendered him on a mercenary footing. In short, she would only agree to conceal the chain, lest it might prove the means of detecting the owner, until Sir Pierce should be placed in perfect safety.

They mounted and resumed their journey, of which Mysie, as bold and sharp-witted in some points as she was simple and susceptible in others, now took in some degree the direction, having only inquired its general destination, and learned that Sir Pierce Shafton desired to go to Edinburgh, where he hoped to find friends and protection. Possessed of this information, Mysie availed herself of her local knowledge to get as soon as possible out of the bounds of the Halidon, and into those of a temporal baron, supposed to be addicted to the reformed doctrines, and upon whose limits, at least, she thought their pursuers would not attempt to hazard any violence. She was not indeed very apprehensive of a pursuit, reckoning with some confidence that the inhabitants of the Tower of Glendearg would find it a matter of difficulty to surmount the obstacles arising from their own bolts and bars, with which she had carefully secured them before setting forth on the retreat.

They journeyed on, therefore, in tolerable security, and Sir Pierce Shafton found leisure to amuse the time in high-flown speeches and long anecdotes of the court of Felician, to which Mysie bent an ear not a whit less attentive, than she did not understand one word out of three which

was uttered by her fellow-traveller. She listened, however, and admired upon trust, as many a wise man has been contented to treat the conversation of a handsome but silly mistress. As for Sir Pierce, he was in his element; and, well assured of the interest and full approbation of his auditor, he went on spouting Euphuism of more than usual obscurity, and at more than usual length. Thus passed the morning, and noon brought them within sight of a winding stream, on the side of which arose an ancient baronial castle, surrounded by some large trees. At a small distance from the gate of the mansion, extended, as in those days was usual, a straggling hamlet, having a church in the centre.

"There are two hostelries in this Kirk-town," said Mysie, "but the worst is best for our purpose; for it stands apart from the other houses, and I ken the man weel, for he has dealt with my father far-malt."

This guess *scientia*, to use a lawyer's phrase, was ill chosen for Mysie's purpose; for Sir Pierce Shafton had, by dint of his own loquacity, been talking himself all this while into a high esteem for his fellow-traveller, and, pleased with the gracious reception which she afforded to his powers of conversation, had well-nigh forgotten that she was not herself one of those high-born beauties of whom he was recounting so many stories, when this unlucky speech at once placed the most disadvantageous circumstances attending her lineage under his immediate recollection. He said nothing, however. What indeed could he say? Nothing was so natural as that a miller's daughter should be acquainted with publicans who dealt with her father for malt, and all that was to be wondered at was the concurrence of events which had rendered such a female the companion and guide of Sir Pierce Shafton of Wilverton, a man of the great Earl of Northumberland, whom princes and sovereigns themselves termed cousin, because of the Pierce blood.¹ He felt the disgrace of strolling through the country with a miller's maiden on the crupper behind him, and was even ungrateful enough to feel some emotions of shame, when he halted his horse at the door of the little inn.

But the alert intelligence of Mysie Happer spared him farther sense of derogation, by instantly springing from the horse, and cramming the cart of mine host, who came out with his mouth agape to receive a guest of the knight's appearance, with an imagined tale, in which circumstances on circumstance were huddled so fast, as to astonish Sir Pierce Shafton, whose own invention was none of the most brilliant. She explained to the publican that this was a great English knight-travelling from the Monastery to the Court of Scotland, after having paid his vows to Saint Mary, and that she had been directed to conduct him as far on the road; and that Ball, her galfrey, had fallen by the way, because he had been over-wrought with carrying home the last melder of meal to the port-cotter of Langhope; and that she had turned in Ball to graze in the Tasker's park, near Cripple-crook, for he had stood as still as Lot's wife with very weariness; and that the knight had courteously insisted she should ride behind him, and

that she had brought him to her kene friend's hostelry rather than to proud Peter Peddie's, who got his malt at the Mellerstane mills; and that he must get the best that the house afforded, and that he must get it ready in a moment of time, and that she was ready to help in the kitchen.

All this ran glibly off the tongue without pause on the part of Mysie Happer, or doubt on that of the landlord. The guest's horse was conducted to the stable, and he himself installed in the cleanest corner and best seat which the place afforded. Mysie, ever active and officious, was at once engaged in preparing food, in spreading the table, and in making all the better arrangements which her experience could suggest, for the honour and comfort of her companion. He would fain have resisted this; for while it was impossible not to be gratified with the eager and alert kindness which was so active in his service, he felt an undefinable pain in seeing Mysie engaged in these menial services, and discharging them, moreover, as one to whom they were but too familiar. Yet this jarring feeling was mixed with, and perhaps balanced by, the extreme grace with which the neat-handed maiden executed these tasks, however mean in themselves, and gave to the wretched corner of a miserable inn of the period, the air of a bower, in which an enamoured fairy, or at least a shepherdess of Arcadia, was displaying, with unavailing solicitude, her designs on the heart of some knight, destined by fortune to higher thoughts, and a more splendid union.

The lightness and grace with which Mysie covered the little round table with a snow-white cloth, and arranged upon it the hastily-roasted capon, with its accompanying stoup of Bourdeaux, were but plebeian graces in themselves; but yet there were very flattering ideas excited by each glance. She was so very well made, agile at once and graceful, with her hand and arm as white as snow, and her face in which a smile contended with a blush, and her eye which looked ever at Shafton when he looked elsewhere, and were dropped at once when they encountered his, that she was irresistible! In fine, the affectionate delicacy of her whole demeanour, joined to the promptitude and boldness she had so lately evinced, tended to ennoble the services she had rendered, as if some

— "sweet engaging Grace

"Put on some clothes to come abroad,
And took a waiter's place."

But, on the other hand, came the damning reflection, that these duties were not taught her by Love, to serve the beloved only, but arose from the ordinary and natural habits of a miller's daughter, accustomed, doubtless, to render the same service to every wealthier churl who frequented her father's mill. This stopped the mouth of vanity, and of the love which vanity had been hatching, as effectually as a peck of literal flour would have done.

Amidst this variety of emotions, Sir Pierce Shafton forgot not to ask the object of them to sit down and partake the good cheer which she had been so anxious to provide and to place in order. He expected that this invitation would have been bashfully, perhaps, but certainly most thankfully, accepted; but he was partly flattered, and partly piqued, by the mixture of deference and repugnance with which Mysie declined his invitation. Immediately after, she vanished from the apart-

¹ Proclaim with us somewhere, (the readers of romance are indifferent to accurate references,) that the King of France called out of the Picardy people, because of the blood of Northumberland.

ment, leaving the Euphuist to consider whether he was most gratified or displeased by her disappearance.

In fact, this was a point on which he would have found it difficult to make up his mind, had there been any necessity for it. As there was none, he drank a few cups of claret, and sang (to himself) a strophe or two of the canzonettes of the divine Astrophel. But in spite both of wine and of Sir Philip Sidney, the connection in which he now stood, and that which he was in future to hold, with the lovely Molinara, or Mysinda, as he had been pleased to denominate Myrie Happer, recurred to his mind. The fashion of the times (as we have already noticed) fortunately coincided with his own natural generosity of disposition, which indeed amounted almost to extravagance, in prohibiting, as a deadly sin, alike against gallantry, olivary, and morality, his rewarding the good offices he had received from this poor maiden, by abusing any of the advantages which her confidence in his honour had afforded. To do Sir Piercie, justice, it was an idea which never entered into his head; and he would probably have dealt the most scientific *imbroccata*, *stoccata*, or *punto reverse*, which the school of Vincent Saviola had taught him, to any man who had dared to suggest to him such selfish and ungrateful meanness. On the other hand, he was a man, and foresaw various circumstances which might render their journey together in this intimate fashion a scandal and a snare. Moreover, he was a corcomb and a courtier, and felt there was something ridiculous in travelling the land with a miller's daughter behind his saddle, giving rise to suspicions not very creditable to either, and to ludicrous constructions, so far as he himself was concerned.

"I would," he said half aloud, "that, if such might be done without harm or discredit to the too-ambitious, yet too-well-distinguishing Molinara, she and I were fairly covered, and bound on our different courses; even as we see the goodly vessel bound for the distant seas hoist sails and bear away into the deep, while the humble fly-boat carries to shore those friends, who, with wounded hearts and weary eyes, have committed to their higher destinies the more daring adventurers by whom the fair frigate is manned."

He had scarce uttered the wish when it was gratified; for the host entered to say that his worshipful knighthood's horse was ready to be brought forth as he had desired; and on his inquiry for "the—the damsel—that is—the young woman——"

"Myrie Happer," said the landlord, "has returned to her father's; but she bade me say, you could not miss the road for Edinburgh, in respect it was neither far, nor foul, nor gay."

It is seldom we are exactly blessed with the precise fulfilment of our wishes at the moment when we utter them; perhaps because Heaven wisely withhold what, if granted, would be often received with ingratitude. So at least it chanced in the present instance; for when, mine host said that Myrie was returned homeward, the knight was tempted to reply, with an ejaculation of surprise and vexation, and a hasty demand, whether and where she had departed! The first question his surprise expressed, the second found utterance.

"Is she gone?" said the host, going on

him, and repeating his question—"She is gone home to her father's, it is like—and she good just when she gave orders about your worship's horse, and saw it well fed, (she might have trusted me, but millers and millers' kin think a body as thick like as themselves,) an' she's three miles on the gate by this time."

"Is she gone then?" muttered Sir Piercie, making two or three hasty strides through the narrow apartment—"Is she gone!—Well, then, let her go. She could have had but disgrace by abiding by me, and I little credit by her society. That I should have thought there was such difficulty in shaking her off! I warrant she is by this time laughing with some clown she has encountered; and my rich chain will prove a good dowry.—And ought it not to prove so! and has she not deserved it, were it ten times more valuable!—Piercie Shafton! Piercie Shafton! dost thou grudge thy deliverance the guerdon she hath so dearly won! The golden air of this northern land hath infected thee, Piercie Shafton! and blighted the blossoms of thy generosity, even as it is said to shrivel the flowers of the mulberry.—'Yet I thought,'" he added, after a moment's pause, "that she would not so easily and voluntarily have parted from me. But it ails not thinking of it.—Cast my reckoning, mine host, and let your groom lead forth my nag."

The good host seemed also to have some mental point to discuss, for he answered not instantly, debating perhaps whether his conscience would bear a double charge for the same guests. Apparently his conscience replied in the negative, though not without hesitation, for he at length replied—"It's dafting to lee; it winna deny that the lawing is clean paid. Ne'ertheless, if your worshipful knighthood please to give aught for increase of trouble——"

"How!" said the knight; "the reckoning paid! and by whom, I pray you?"

"E'en by Myrie Happer," answered the honest landlord, with as many compunctious visitings for telling the verity as another might have felt for making a lie in the circumstances—"And out of the moneys supplied for your honour's journey by the Abbot, as she bade to me. And laith yare I to surcharge any gentleman that darkens my doors." He added in the confidence of honesty which his frank avowal entitled him to entertain, "Nevertheless, as I said before, if it please your knighthood of free good-will to consider extraordinary trouble——"

The knight cut short his argument, by throwing the landlord a rare-look, which probably doubled the value of a Scottish reckoning, though it would have defrayed but a half one at the Three Granes or the Vintry. The bounty so much delighted mine host, that he ran to fill the wine-cup (for which no charge was ever made) from a butt yet charrier than that which he had pierced for the former stoup. The knight passed slowly to home, partook of his courtesy, and thanked him with the stiff commendation of the court of Elizabeth; then mounted and followed the northern path, which was pointed out as the nearest to Edinburgh, and which, though very unlike a modern highway, bore yet so distinct a resemblance to a pibroch and fir-quented foad as not to be easily mistaken.

"I shall not need that guidman if I come," said he to himself, as he rode slowly onward; "and I

suppose that was one reason of her abrupt departure, so different from what one might have expected. — Well, I am well rid of her. Do we not pray to be liberated from temptation! Yet that she should have erred so much in estimation of her own situation and mine, as to think of defraying the reckoning! I would I saw her once more, but to explain to her the solecism of which her inexperience hath rendered her guilty. And I fear," he added, as he emerged from some straggling trees, and looked out upon a wild moorish country, composed of a succession of swelling lumpy hills, "I fear I shall soon want the aid of this Ariadne, who might afford me a clew through the recesses of yonder mountainous labyrinth."

As the Knight thus communed with himself, his attention was caught by the sound of a horse's footsteps; and a lad, mounted on a little gray Scottish nag, about fourteen hands high, coming along a path which led from behind the trees, joined him on the high-road, if it could be termed such.

The dress of the lad was completely in village fashion, yet neat and handsome in appearance. He had a jerkin of gray cloth slashed and trimmed, with black hose of the same, with deer-skin rufflers or sandals, and handsome silver spurs. A cloak of a dark mulberry colour was closely drawn round the upper part of his person, and the cape in part muffled his face, which was also obscured by his bonnet of black velvet cloth, and its little plume of feathers.

Sir Pierce Shafton, fond of society, desirous also to have a guide, and, moreover, prepossessed in favour of so handsome a youth, failed not to ask him whence he came, and whither he was going. The youth looked another way, as he answered, that he was going to Edinburgh, "to seek service in some nobleman's family."

"I fear me you have run away from your last master," said Sir Pierce, "since you dare not look me in the face while you answer my question."

"Indeed, sir, I have not," answered the lad, bashfully, while, as if with reluctance, he turned round his face, and instantly withdrew it. It was a glance, but the discovery was complete. There was no mistaking the dark full eye, the cheek in which much embarrassment could not altogether disguise an expression of comic turnout, and the whole figure at once betrayed, under her metamorphosis, the Maid of the Mill. The recognition was joyful, and Sir Pierce Shafton was too much pleased to have regained his companion to remember the very good reasons which had collected him for losing her.

To his questions respecting her dress, she answered, that she had obtained it in the Kirk-town from a friend; it was the holiday suit of a son of hers, who had taken the field with his liege-lord, the Baron of the land. She had borrowed the suit under pretence she meant to play in some mummery or rural masquerade. She had left, she said, her own apparel in exchange, which was better worth ten crowns than this was worth four.

"And the nag, my ingenious Maidman," said Sir Pierce, "whence comes the nag?"

"I borrowed him from our host at the Glend-Ment," she replied; and added, half stifling a laugh, "he has sent to get instead of it, our Mill, which I left in the Baron's Park at Cripplegreen. He will be sorry if he find it there."

"But then the poor man will lose his horse, most argue Mysinda," said Sir Pierce Shafton, whose English notions of property were a little startled at a mode of acquisition more congenial to the ideas of a miller's daughter (and he a Border miller to boot) than with those of an English person of quality.

"And if he does lose his horse," said Mysie, laughing, "surely he is not the first man on the marches who has had such a mischance. But he will be no loser, for I warrant he will stop the value out of moneys which he has owed my father this many a day."

"But then your father will be the loser," objected yet again the pertinacious uprightness of Sir Pierce Shafton.

"What signifies it now to talk of my father?" said the damsel, pettishly; then instantly changing to a tone of deep feeling, she added, "My father has this day lost that which will make him hold light the loss of all the gear he has left."

Struck with the accents of remorseful sorrow in which his companion uttered these few words, the English knight felt himself bound both in honour and conscience to expostulate with her as strongly as he could, on the risk of the step which she had now taken, and on the propriety of her returning to her father's house. The matter of his discourse, though adorned with many unnecessary flourishes, was honourable both to his head and heart.

The Maid of the Mill listened to his flowing periods with her head sunk on her bosom as she rode, like one in deep thought or deeper sorrow. When he had finished, she raised up her countenance, looked full on the knight, and replied with great firmness — "If you are weary of my company, Sir Pierce Shafton, you have but to say so, and the Miller's daughter will be no farther number to you. And do not think I will be a burden to you, if we travel together to Edinburgh; I have wit enough and pride enough to be a willing burden to no man. But if you reject not my company at present, and fear not it will be burdensome to you hereafter, speak no more to me of returning back. All that you can say to me I have said to myself; and that I am now here, is a sign that I have said it to no purpose. Let this subject, therefore, be for ever ended betwixt us. I have already, in some small fashion, been useful to you, and the time may come I may be more so; for this is not your land of England, where men say justice is done with little fear or favour to great and to small; but it is a land where men do by the strong hand, and defend by the ready wit, and I know better than you the perils you are exposed to."

Sir Pierce Shafton was somewhat mortified to find that the damsel conceived her presence useful to him as a protectress as well as guide, and said something of seeking protection from naught save his own arm and his good sword. Mysie answered very quietly, that she nothing doubted his bravery; but it was that very quality of bravery which was most likely to involve him in danger. Sir Pierce Shafton, whose head never kept very long in any continued train of thinking, acquiesced without much reply, resolving in his own mind that the maiden only used this apology to disguise her real motive, of affection to his person. The romance of the situation flattered his vanity, and elevated his imagination, as placing him in the

situation of one of those romantic heroes of whom he had read the histories, where similar transformations made a distinguished figure.

He took many a sidelong glance at his page, whose habits of country sport and country exercise had rendered her quite adequate to sustain the character she had assumed. She managed the little nag with dexterity, and even with grace; nor did any thing appear that could have betrayed her disguise, except when a bashful consciousness of her companion's eye being fixed on her, gave her an appearance of temporary embarrassment, which greatly added to her beauty.

The couple rode forward as in the morning, pleased with themselves and with each other, until they arrived at the village where they were to repose for the night, and where all the inhabitants of the little inn, both male and female, joined in extolling the good grace and handsome countenance of the English knight, and the uncommon beauty of his youthful attendant.

It was here that Mysie Happer first made Sir Piercie Shafton sensible of the reserved manner in which she proposed to live with him. She announced him as her master, and, waiting upon him with the reverent demeanour of an actual domestic, permitted not the least approach to familiarity, not even such as the knight might with the utmost innocence have ventured upon. For example, Sir Piercie, who, as we know, was a great connoisseur in dress, was detailing to her the advantageous change which he proposed to make in her attire as soon as they should reach Edinburgh, by arraying her in his own colours of pink and carnation. Mysie Happer listened with great complacency to the unctuous with which he dilated upon welts, laces, slashes, and trimmings, until, carried away by the enthusiasm with which he was asserting the superiority of the falling band over the Spanish ruff, he approached his hand, in the way of illustration, towards the collar of his page's doublet. She instantly stepped back and gravely reminded him that she was alone and under his protection.

"You cannot but remember the cause which has brought me here," she continued; "make the least approach to any familiarity which you would not offer to a princess surrounded by her court, and you have seen the last of the Miller's daughter—She will vanish as the chaff disappears from the shieling-hill, when the west wind blows."

"I do protest, fair Molinara," said Sir Piercie Shafton—but the fair Molinara had disappeared before his protest could be uttered. "A most singular wench," said he to himself; "and by this hand, as discreet as she is fair-featured—Certain, shame it were to offer her scathe or dishonour! She makes similes too, though somewhat savouring of her condition. Had she but read Euphues, and forgotten that accursed mill and shieling-hill, it is my thought that her converse would be brodered with as many and as choice pearls of compliment, as that of the most rhetorical lady in the court of Peloponia. I trust she means to return to bear me company."

But that was no part of Mysie's prudential scheme. It was then drawing to dusk, and he saw

A full view of the scene was witnessed, while that operation was performed by the hand, was called in Scotland the Shieling-hill.

her not again until the next morning, when the horses were brought to the door that they might prosecute their journey.

But our story here necessarily leaves the English knight and his page, to return to the Tower of Glendearg.

CHAPTER XXX.

You call it an ill angel—it may be so;
But sure I am, among the ranks which fell,
'Tis the first stand e'er counsel'd man to rise,
And win the bills the sprite himself had forfeited.
Old Play.

We must resume our narrative at the period when Mary Avenel was conveyed to the apartment which had been formerly occupied by the two Glendinnings, and when her faithful attendant, Tibbie, had exhausted herself in useless attempts to compose and to comfort her. Father Eustace also dealt forth with well-meant kindness those apothegms and dogmata of consolation, which friend ship almost always offers to grief, though they are uniformly offered in vain. She was at length left to indulge in the desolation of her own sorrowful feelings. She felt as those who, loving for the first time, have lost what they loved, before time and repeated calamity have taught them that every loss is to a certain extent repairable or endurable.

Such grief may be conceived better than it can be described, as is well known to those who have experienced it. But Mary Avenel had been taught by the peculiarity of her situation, to regard herself as the Child of Destiny; and the melancholy and reflecting turn of her disposition gave to her sorrows a depth and breadth peculiar to her character. The grave—and it was a bloody grave—had closed, as she believed, over the youth to whom she was secretly, but most warmly attached; the force and ardour of Halbert's character bearing a singular correspondence to the energy of which her own was capable. Her sorrow did not exhaust itself in sighs and tears, but when the first shock had passed away, concentrated itself with deep and steady meditation, to collect and calculate, like a bankrupt debtor, the full amount of her loss. It seemed as if all that connected her with earth, had vanished with this broken tie. She had never dared to anticipate the probability of an ultimate union with Halbert, yet now his supposed fall seemed that of the only tree which was to shelter her from the storm. She respected the more gentle character, and more peaceful attainments, of the younger Glendinning; but it had not escaped her (what never indeed escaped woman in such circumstances) that he was disposed to place himself in competition with what she, the daughter of a proud and warlike race, deemed the more manly qualities of his older brother; and there is no time when a woman does so little justice to the character of a surviving lover, as when comparing him with the preferred rival of whom she has been recently deprived.

The motherly, but coarse kindness of Dame Glendinning, and the doating fondness of her old domestic, seemed now the only bond feeling of which she formed the object; and she could not but reflect how little these were to be compared with the devoted attachment of a high-souled youth, whose least glance of her eye could command, as the high-

motives seemed to govern by the bridle of the rider. It was when plunged among these desolating reflections that Mary Avenel felt the void of mind, arising from the narrow and bigoted ignorance in which Rome then educated the children of her church. Their whole religion was a ritual, and their prayers were the formal iteration of unknown words, which, in the hour of affliction, could yield but little consolation to those who from habit resorted to them. Unused to the practice of mental devotion, and of personal approach to the Divine Presence by prayer, she could not help exclaiming in her distress, "There is no aid for me on earth, and I know not how to ask it from Heaven!"

As she spoke thus in an agony of sorrow, she cast her eyes into the apartment, and saw the mysterious Spirit, which waited upon the fortunes of her house, standing in the moonlight in the midst of the room. The same form, as the reader knows, had more than once offered itself to her sight; and either her native boldness of mind, or some peculiarity attached to her from her birth, made her now look upon it without shrinking. But the White Lady of Avenel was now more distinctly visible, and more closely present, than she had ever before seemed to be, and Mary was appalled by her presence. She would, however, have spoken; but there ran a tradition, that though others who had seen the White Lady had asked questions and received answers, yet those of the house of Avenel who had ventured to speak to her, had never long survived the colloquy. The figure, besides, as sitting up in her bed, Mary Avenel gazed on it intently, seemed by its gesture to caution her to keep silence, and at the same time to bespeak attention.

The White Lady then seemed to press one of the planks of the floor with her foot, while, in her usual low, melancholy, and musical chaunt, she repeated the following verses:

"Maiden, whose sorrows wall the Living Dead,
Whose eyes shall commune with the Dead Alive,
Maiden, attend! Beneath my foot lies hid
The Word, the Law, the Path, which thou dost strive
To find and cannot find. — Could spirits shed
Tears for their lot, it were my lot to weep,
Showing the road which I shall never tread,
Though my foot points it. — Sleep, eternal sleep,
Dark, long, and cold forgetfulness my lot! —
But do not thou, at human life repine,
Secure thou lies full garden in this spot,
For all the woes that wait full Adam's line —
Sleep, then, and make it yours — I may not make it mine."

The phantom stooped towards the floor as she concluded, as if with the intention of laying her hand on the board on which she stood. But ere she had completed that gesture, her form became indistinct, was presently only like the shade of a fleecy cloud, which passed betwixt earth and the moon, and was soon altogether invisible.

A strong impression of fear, the first which she had experienced in her life to any agitating extent, seized upon the mind of Mary Avenel; and for a minute she felt a disposition to faint. She repelled it, however, flustered her cottage, and addressed herself to saints and angels, as her church recommended. Broken slumbers at length stole on her exhausted mind and frame, and she slept until the dawn was about to arise, when she was awakened by the cry of "Treason! treason! follow, follow!" which arose in the tower, when it was found that Pierce's Station had made his escape.

Apprehensive of some new misfortune, Mary

Avenel hastily arranged the dress which she had not laid aside, and, venturing to quit her chamber, learned from Tibb, who, with her gray hairs dishevelled like those of a sibyl, was flying from room to room, that the bloody Southron villain had made his escape, and that Halbert Glendinning, poor fellow, would sleep unrevenged and unquiet in his bloody grave. In the lower apartments, the young men were roaring like thunder, and venting in oaths and exclamations against the fugitives the rage which they experienced in finding themselves locked up within the tower, and debarred from their vindictive pursuit by the wily precautions of Mysie Happer. The authoritative voice of the Sub-Prior commanding silence was next heard; upon which Mary Avenel, whose tone of feeling did not lead her to enter into counsel or society with the rest of the party, again retired to her solitary chamber.

The rest of the family held counsel in the spence, Edward almost beside himself with rage, and the Sub-Prior in no small degree offended at the effrontery of Mysie Happer in attempting such a scheme, as well as at the mingled boldness and dexterity with which it had been executed. But neither surprise nor anger availed aught. The windows, well secured with iron bars for keeping assailants out, proved now as effectual for detaining the inhabitants within. The battlements were open, indeed; but without ladder or ropes to act as a substitute for wings, there was no possibility of descending from them. They easily succeeded in alarming the inhabitants of the cottages beyond the precincts of the court; but the men had been called in to strengthen the guard for the night, and only women and children remained, who could contribute nothing in the emergency, except their useless exclamations of surprise, and there were no neighbours for miles around. Dame Elgloth, however, though drowned in tears, was not so unmindful of external affairs, but that she could find voice enough to tell the women and children without, to "leave their skirling, and look after the cows that she couldna get minded, what wi' the awfu' distraction of her mind, what wi' that fause slut having locked them up in their ain tower as fast as if they had been in the Jeddart tolbooth."

Meanwhile, the men finding other modes of exit impossible, unanimously concluded to force the doors with such tools as the house afforded for the purpose. These were not very proper for the occasion, and the strength of the doors was great. The interior one, formed of oak, occupied them for three mortal hours, and there was little prospect of the iron door being forced in double the time.

While they were engaged in this ungrateful toil, Mary Avenel had with much less labour acquired exact knowledge of what the Spirit had intimated in her mystic rhyme. On examining the spot which the phantom had indicated by her gestures, it was not difficult to discover that a board had been loosened, which might be raised at pleasure. On removing this piece of plank, Mary Avenel was astonished to find the Black Book, well remembered by her as her mother's favourite study, of which she immediately took possession, with as much joy as her present situation rendered her capable of feeling.

Ignorant in a great measure of its contents, Mary Avenel had been taught from her infancy to hold this volume in sacred veneration. It is probable that the deceased Lady of Walter Avenel only

postponed initiating her daughter into the mysteries of the Divine Word, until she should be better able to comprehend both the lessons which it taught, and the risk at which, in those times, they were studied. Death interposed, and removed her before the times became favourable to the reformers, and before her daughter was so far advanced in age as to be fit to receive religious instruction of this deep import. But the affectionate mother had made preparations for the earthly work which she had most at heart. There were slips of paper inserted in the volume, in which, by an appeal to, and a comparison of, various passages in holy writ, the errors and human inventions with which the Church of Rome had defaced the simple edifice of Christianity, as erected by its divine architect, were pointed out. These controversial topics were treated with a spirit of calmness and Christian charity, which might have been an example to the theologians of the period; but they were clearly, fairly, and plainly argued, and supported by the necessary proofs and references. Other papers there were which had no reference whatever to polemics, but were the simple effusions of a devout mind communing with itself. Among these was one frequently used, as it seemed from the state of the manuscript, on which the mother of Mary had transcribed and placed together those affecting texts to which the heart has recourse in affliction, and which assures us at once of the sympathy and protection afforded to the children of the promise. In Mary Avenel's state of mind, those attracted her above all the other lessons, which, coming from a hand so dear, had reached her at a time so critical, and in a manner so touching. She read the affecting promises, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and the consoling exhortation, "Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee." She read them, and her heart acquiesced in the conclusion, Surely this is the word of God!

There are those to whom a sense of religion has come in storm and tempest; there are those whom it has summoned amid scenes of revoly and idle vanity; there are those, too, who have heard its "still small voice" amid rural leisure and placid contentment. But perhaps the knowledge which causeth not to err, is most frequently impressed upon the mind during seasons of affliction; and tears are the softened showers which cause the seed of Heaven to spring and take root in the human breast. At least it was thus with Mary Avenel. She was insensible to the discordant noise which rang below, the clang of bars and the jarring symphony of the levers which they used to force them, the measured shouts of the labouring inmates as they combined their strength for each heave, and gave time with their voices to the exertion of their arms, and their deeply muttered vows of revenge on the fugitives who had bequeathed them at their departure a task so toilsome and difficult. Not all this din, combined in hideous concert, and expressive of aught but peace, love, and forgiveness, could divert Mary Avenel from the new course of study on which she had so singularly entered. "The serenity of Heaven," she said, "is above me; the sounds which are around are but those of earth and earthly passion."

* Meanwhile the moon was passed, and little impression was made on the iron grate, when they were liberated as it received a sudden reinforcement

by the unexpected arrival of Christie of the Clint-hill. He came at the head of a small party, consisting of four horsemen, who bore in their caps the sprig of holly, which was the badge of Avenel.

"What, ho!—my masters," he said, "I bring you a prisoner."

"You had better have brought us liberty," said Dan of the Howlet-hirst.

Christie looked at the state of affairs with great surprise. "An I were to be hanged for it," he said, "as I may for as little a matter, I could not forbear laughing at seeing men peeping through their own bars like so many rats in a rat-trap, and he with the beard behind, like the oldest rat in the cellar."

"Hush, thou unmannered knave," said Edward, "it is the Sub-Prior; and this is neither time, place, nor company, for your ruffian jests."

"What, he! is my young master malapropos?" said Christie; "why, man, were he my own carnal father, instead of being father to half the world, I would have my laugh out. And now it is over, I must assist you, I reckon, for you are setting very greenly about this gear—put the pinch nearer the staple, man, and hand me an iron crow through the grate, for that's the fowl to fly away with a wicket on its shoulders. I have broke into as many grates as you have teeth in your young head—ay, and broke out of them too, as the captain of the Castle of Lochmaben knows full well."

Christie did not boast more skill than he really possessed; for, applying their combined strength, under the direction of that experienced engineer, bolt and staple gave way before them, and in less than half an hour, the grate, which had so long repelled their force, stood open before them.

"And now," said Edward, "to horse, my mates, and pursue the villain Shafston!"

"Halt there," said Christie of the Clint-hill; "pursue your guest, my master's friend and my own!—there go two words to that bargain. What the foul fiend would you pursue him for?"

"Let me pass," said Edward, vehemently, "I will be staid by no man—the villain has murdered my brother!"

"What says he?" said Christie, turning to the others; "murdered? who is murdered, and by whom?"

"The Englishman, Sir Pierce Shafston," said Dan of the Howlet-hirst, "has murdered young Halbert Glendinning yesterday morning, and we have all risen to the fray."

"It is a bedlam business, I think," said Christie. "First I find you all locked up in your own tower, and next I ask come to prevent you revenging a murder that was never committed!"

"I tell you," said Edward, "that my brother was slain and buried yesterday morning by this false Englishman."

"And I tell you," answered Christie, "that I saw him alive and well last night. I would I knew his trick of getting out of the grave; that men find it more hard to break through a green sod than a grated door."

Every body now passed, and looked on Christie in astonishment, until the Sub-Prior, who had hitherto avoided communication with him, came up and required earnestly to know, whether he meant really to maintain that Halbert Glendinning lived.

"Father," he said, with more respect than he

usually shewer to any one save his master, "I confess I may sometimes jest with those of your coat, but not with you; because, as you may partly recollect, I owe you a life. It is certain as the sun is in heaven, that Halbert Glandinning supped at the house of my master the Baron of Avenel last night, and that he came thither in company with an old man, of whom more anon."

"And where is he now?"

"The devil only can answer that question," replied Christie, "for the devil has possessed the whole family, I think. He took fright, the foolish lad, at something or other which our Baron did in his moody humour, and so he jumped into the lake and swam ashore like a wild duck. Robin of Redcastle spoiled a good gelding in chasing him this morning."

"And why did he chase the youth?" said the Sub-Prior; "what harm had he done?"

"None that I know of," said Christie; "but such was the Baron's order, being in his mood, and all the world having gone mad, as I have said before."

"Whither away so fast, Edward?" said the monk.

"To Corri-man-ahian, Father," answered the youth. — "Martin and Dan, take pick-axe and mattock, and follow me if you be men!"

"Right," said the monk, "and fail not to give us instant notice what you find."

"If you find aught there like Halbert Glandinning," said Christie, hallooing after Edward, "I will be bound to eat him unaltered. — 'Tis a sight to see now how that fellow takes the bent! — It is in the time of action men see what lads are made of. Halbert was aye skipping up and down like a roe, and his brother used to sit in the chimney-nook with his book and sick-like trash — But the lad was like a loaded hackbut, which will stand in the corner as quiet as an old crutch until ye draw the trigger, and then there is nothing but flash and smoke. — But here comes my prisoner; and, setting other matters aside, I must pray a word with you, Sir Sub-Prior, respecting him. I came on before to treat about him, but I was interrupted with this fisherie."

As he spoke, two more of Avenel's troopers rode into the court-yard, leading betwixt them a horse, on which, with his hands bound to his side, sat the reformed preacher, Henry Warden.

CHAPTER XXXI.

At school I knew him — a sharp-witted youth.
Gave, thoughtful, and reserved among his mates,
Turning the hours of sport and frolic to labour,
Starting his body to reform his mind.

Old Play.

THE Sub-Prior, at the Borderer's request, had not failed to return to the tower, into which he was followed by Christie of the Clintill, who, shutting the door of the apartment, drew near, and began his discourse with great confidence and familiarity.

"My master," he said, "sends me with his commendations to you, Sir Sub-Prior, above all the community of Saint Mary's, and more specially than even to the Abbot himself; for though he be

termed my lord, and so forth, all the world knows that you are the tongue of the trumpet."

"If you have aught to say to me concerning the community," said the Sub-Prior, "it were well you proceeded in it without farther delay. Time passes, and the fate of young Glandinning dwells on my mind."

"I will be caution for him, body for body," said Christie. — "I do protest to you, as sure as I am a living man, so surely is he one."

"Should I not tell his unhappy mother the joyful tidings?" said Father Eustace, — "and yet better wait till they return from searching the grave. Well, Sir Jackman, your message to me from your master?"

"My lord and master," said Christie, "hath good reason to believe that, from the information of certain back friends, whom he will reward at more leisure, your reverend community hath been led to deem him ill attached to Holy Church, allied with heretics, and those who favour heresy, and a hungerer after the spoils of your Abbey."

"Be brief, good benchman," said the Sub-Prior, "for the devil is ever most to be feared when he preacheth."

"Briefly, then — my master desires your friendship; and to excuse himself from the malignant calumnies, he sends to your Abbot that Henry Warden, whose sermons have turned the world upside down, to be dealt with as Holy Church directs, and as the Abbot's pleasure may determine."

The Sub-Prior's eyes sparkled at the intelligence; for it had been accounted a matter of great importance that this man should be arrested, possessed, as he was known to be, of so much zeal and popularity; that scarcely the preaching of Knox himself had been more awakening to the people, and more formidable to the Church of Rome.

In fact, that ancient system, which so well accommodated its doctrines to the wants and wishes of a barbarous age, had, since the art of printing, and the gradual diffusion of knowledge, lain floating like some huge Leviathan, into which ten thousand reforming fishers were darting their harpoons. The Roman Church of Scotland, in particular, was at her last gasp, actually blowing blood and water, yet still with unrelenting, though animal exertions, maintaining the conflict with the assailants, who on every side were plunging their weapons into her bulky body. In many large towns, the monasteries had been suppressed by the fury of the populace; in other places, their possessions had been usurped by the power of the reformed nobles; but still the hierarchy made a part of the common law of the realm, and might claim both its property and its privileges wherever it had the means of asserting them. The community of Saint Mary's of Kennaquhair was considered as being particularly in this situation. They had retained, undiminished, their territorial power and influence; and the great barons in the neighbourhood, partly from their attachment to the party in the state who still upheld the old system of religion, partly because each grudged the share of the prey which the others must necessarily claim, had as yet abstained from despoiling the Halidoms. The Community was also understood to be protected by the powerful Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, whose zealous attachment to the Catholic faith stood at

after period the great rebellion of the tenth of Elizabeth.

Thus happily placed, it was supposed by the friends of the decaying cause of the Roman Catholic faith, that some determined example of courage and resolution, exercised where the franchises of the church were yet entire, and her jurisdiction undisturbed, might awe the progress of the new opinions into activity; and, protected by the laws which still existed, and by the favour of the sovereign, might be the means of securing the territory which Rome yet preserved in Scotland, and perhaps of recovering that which she had lost.

The matter had been considered more than once by the northern Catholics of Scotland, and they had held communication with those of the south. Father Eustace, devoted by his public and private vows, had caught the flame, and had eagerly advised that they should execute the doom of heresy on the first reformed preacher, or, according to his sense, on the first heretic of eminence, who should venture within the precincts of the Halidome. A heart, naturally kind and noble, was, in this instance, as it has been in many more, deceived by its own generosity. Father Eustace would have been a bad administrator of the inquisitorial power of Spain, where that power was omnipotent, and where judgment was exercised without danger to those who inflicted it. In such a situation his rigour might have relented in favour of the criminal, whom it was at his pleasure to crush or to place at freedom. But in Scotland, during this crisis, the case was entirely different. The question was, whether one of the spirituality dared, at the hazard of his own life, to step forward to assert and exercise the rights of the church. Was there any one who would venture to wield the thunder in her cause, or must it remain like that in the hand of a painted Jupiter, the object of derision instead of terror? The crisis was calculated to awake the soul of Eustace; for it comprised the question, whether he dared, at all hazards to himself, to execute with stoical severity a measure which, according to the general opinion, was to be advantageous to the church, and, according to ancient law, and to his firm belief, was not only justifiable but meritorious.

While such resolutions were agitated amongst the Catholics, chance placed a victim within their grasp. Henry Warden had, with the animation proper to the enthusiastic reformers of the age, transgressed, in the vehemence of his zeal, the bounds of the discretionary liberty allowed to his sect so far, that it was thought the Queen's personal dignity was concerned in bringing him to justice. He fled from Edinburgh, with recommendations, however, from Lord James Stewart, afterwards the celebrated Earl of Murray, to some of the Border chieftains of inferior rank, who were privately conjured to procure him safe passage into England. One of the principal persons to whom such recommendation was addressed, was Julian Arnesel; for as yet, and for a considerable time afterwards, the correspondence and interest of Lord James lay rather with the subordinate leaders than with the chiefs of great power, and men of distinguished influence upon the Border. Julian Arnesel had intrigued without scruple with both parties — yet when he was, he certainly would not have practised guile against the guest whom Lord James had recommended to his hospitality, had it not been

for what he termed the preacher's officious intermeddling in his family affairs. But when he had determined to make Warden rue the lecture he had read him, and the scene of public scandal which he had caused in his hall, Julian resolved, with the constitutional shrewdness of his disposition, to combine his vengeance with his interest. And therefore, instead of doing violence on the person of Henry Warden within his own castle, he determined to deliver him up to the Community of Saint Mary's, and at once make them the instruments of his own revenge, and found a claim of personal recompense, either in money, or in a grant of Abbey lands at a low, quit-rent, which last began now to be the established form in which the temporal nobles plundered the spirituality.

The Sub-Prior, therefore, of Saint Mary's, unexpectedly saw the steadfast, active, and inflexible enemy of the church delivered into his hand, and felt himself called upon to make good his promises to the friends of the Catholic faith, by quenching heresy in the blood of one of its most zealous professors.

To the honour more of Father Eustace's heart than of his consistency, the communication that Henry Warden was placed within his power, struck him with more sorrow than triumph; but his next feelings were those of exultation. "It is said," he said to himself, "to cause human suffering, it is awful to cause human blood to be spilled; but the judge to whom the sword of Saint Paul, as well as the keys of Saint Peter, are confided, must not flinch from his task. Our weapon returns into our own bosom, if not wielded with a steady and unrelenting hand against the irreconcilable enemies of the Holy Church. *Pereat iste!* It is the doom he has incurred, and were all the heretics in Scotland armed and at his back, they should not prevent its being pronounced, and, if possible, enforced. — Bring the heretic before me," he said, issuing his commands aloud, and in a tone of authority.

Henry Warden was led in, his hands still bound, but his feet at liberty.

"Clear the apartment," said the Sub-Prior, "of all but the necessary guard on the prisoner."

All retired excepting Christie of the Clinthill, who, having dismissed the inferior troopers whom he commanded, unsheathed his sword, and placed himself beside the door, as if taking upon him the character of sentinel.

The judge and the accused met face to face, and in that of both was embrowned the noble confidence of rectitude. The monk was about, at the utmost risk to himself and his community, to exercise what in his ignorance he conceived to be his duty. The preacher, actuated by a better-informed, yet not a more ardent zeal, was prompt to submit to execution for God's sake, and to seal, were it necessary, his mission with his blood. Placed at such a distance of time as better enables us to appreciate the tendency of the principles on which they severally acted, we cannot doubt to which the palm ought to be awarded. But the zeal of Father Eustace was as free from passion and personal views as if it had been exerted in a better cause.

They approached each other, armed each and prepared for intellectual conflict, and each intently regarding his opponent, as if either hoped to spy out some defect, some chink in the armour of his antagonist. As they gazed on each other, old recollections

stems began to awake in either bosom, at the sight of features long unseen and much altered, but not forgotten. The brow of the Sub-Prior dimmed by degrees its frown of command, the look of calm yet stern defiance gradually vanished from that of Warden, and both lost for an instant that of gloomy solemnity. They had been ancient and intimate friends in youth at a foreign university, but had been long separated from each other; and the change of name, which the preacher had adopted from motives of safety, and the monk from the common custom of the convent, had prevented the possibility of their hitherto recognizing each other in the opposite parts which they had been playing in the great polemical and political drama. But now the Sub-Prior exclaimed, "Henry Wellwood!" and the preacher replied, "William Allan!"—and, stirred by the old familiar names, and never-to-be-forgotten recollections of college studies and college intimacy, their hands were for a moment locked in each other.

"Remove his bonds," said the Sub-Prior, and assisted Christie in performing that office with his own hands, although the prisoner sorely would consent to be unbound, repeating with emphasis, that he rejoiced in the cause for which he suffered shame. When his hands were at liberty, however, he shewed his sense of the kindness by again exchanging a grasp and a look of affection with the Sub-Prior.

The salute was frank and generous on either side, yet it was but the friendly recognition and greeting which are wont to take place betwixt adverse champions, who do nothing in hate but all in honour. As each felt the pressure of the situation in which they stood, he quitted the grasp of the other's hand, and fell back, confronting each other with looks more calm and sorrowful than expressive of any other passion. The Sub-Prior was the first to speak.

"And is this, then, the end of that restless activity of mind, that bold and indefatigable love of truth that urged investigation to its utmost limits, and seemed to take heaven itself by storm—is this the termination of Wellwood's career!—And having known and loved him during the best years of our youth, do we meet in our old age as judge and criminal?"

"Not as judge and criminal," said Henry Warden,—for to avoid confusion we describe him by his later and best known name—"Not as judge and criminal do we meet, but as a misguided oppressor and his ready and devoted victim. I, too, may ask, are these the harvest of the rich hopes excited by the chemical learning, acute logical powers, and varied knowledge of William Allan, that he should sink to be the solitary drone of a cell, gazed only above the swarm with the high commission of executing Roman iniquity on all who oppose Roman impotence?"

"Not so there," answered the Sub-Prior, "be assured—not true that, for into mortal men, will I render an abatement of the power with which the church may have invested me. It was granted but as a loan for her welfare—for her welfare is that of every race be outraged without fear and without shame."

"I answered no more than your misapprehension," answered the preacher, "and in so have you met me as when you first suddenly startled your

authority, aware that his mind at least will defy your influence, as the mow of that Mist Blane which we saw together, shrink not under the heat of the hottest summer sun."

"I do believe thee," said the Sub-Prior, "I do believe that thine is indeed metal unassailable by force. Let it yield then to persuasion. Let us debate those matters of faith, as we once were wont to conduct our scholastic disputes, when hours, nay, days, glided past in the mutual exercise of our intellectual powers. It may be thou mayest yet hear the voice of the shepherd, and return to the universal fold."

"No, Allan," replied the prisoner, "this is no vain question, devised by dreaming scholasticists, on which they may whet their intellectual faculties until the very metal be wasted away. The errors which I combat are like those fiends which are only cast out by fasting and prayer. Alas! not many wise, not many learned are chosen; the cottage and the hamlet shall in our days bear witness against the schools and their disciples. Thy very wisdom, which is foolishness, hath made thee, as the Greeks of old, hold as foolishness that which is the only true wisdom."

"This," said the Sub-Prior, sternly, "is the mere cant of ignorant enthusiasm, which appeals from learning and from authority, from the sure guidance of that lamp which God hath afforded us in the Councils and in the Fathers of the Church, to a rash, self-willed, and arbitrary interpretation of the Scriptures, wrested according to the private opinion of each speculating heretic."

"I disdain to reply to the charge," replied Warden. "The question at issue between your church and mine, is, whether we will be judged by the Holy Scriptures, or by the devices and decisions of men not less subject to error than ourselves, and who have defaced our holy religion with vain devices, reared up idols of stone and wood, in form of those, who, when they lived, were but sinful creatures, to share the worship due only to the Creator—established a toll-house betwixt heaven and hell, that profitable purgatory of which the Pope keeps the keys, like an iniquitous judge commutes punishment for bribes, and —"

"Silence, blasphemer," said the Sub-Prior, sternly, "or I will have thy blatant obloquy stopped with a gag!"

"Ay," replied Warden, "such is the freedom of the Christian conference to which Rome's priests so kindly invite us!—the gag—the rack—the stake—in the *ratio ultima Roma*. But know thou, mine ancient friend, that the character of thy former companion is not so changed by age, but that he still dares to endure for the cause of truth all that thy proud hierarchy shall dare to inflict."

"Of that," said the monk, "I nothing doubt.—Thou wert ever a lion to turn against the spear of the hunter, not a stag to be slung at the sound of his bugle."—He walked through the room in silence. "Wellwood," he said at length, "we can no longer be friends. Our faith, our hope, our anchor on eternity, is no longer the same."

"Deep is my sorrow that thou speakst truth. May God so judge me," said the Reformer, "as I would buy the conversion of a soul like thine with my dearest heart's blood."

"To thee, and with better reason, do I render the wish," replied the Sub-Prior, "it is such an

arm as thine that should defend the bulwarks of the Church, and it is now directing the battering-ram against them, and rendering peevishable the breach through which all that is greedy, and all that is base, and all that is mutable and hot-headed in this innovating age, already hope to advance to destruction and to spoil. But since such is our fate, that we can no longer fight side by side as friends, let us at least act as generous enemies. You cannot have forgotten,

*‘O gran honta del cavallier antiqui !
Beane seniel, arrib’ de feda diversa’*

Although, perhaps,” he added, stopping short in his quotation, “your new faith forbids you to reserve a place in your memory, even for what high poets have recorded of loyal faith and generous sentiment.”

“The faith of Buchanan,” replied the preacher, “the faith of Buchanan and of Beza cannot be unfriendly to literature. But the poet you have quoted affords strains fitter for a dissolute court than for a convent.”

“I might retort on your Theodore Beza,” said the Sub-Prior, smiling; “but I hate the judgment that, like the flesh-fly, skims over whatever is sound, to detect and settle upon some spot which is tainted. But to the purpose. If I conduct thee or send thee a prisoner to Saint Mary’s, thou art to-night a tenant of the dungeon, to-morrow a burden to the gibbet-tree. If I were to let thee go hence at large, I were thereby wronging the Holy Church, and breaking mine own solemn vow. Other resolutions may be adopted in the capital, or better times may speedily ensue. Wilt thou remain a true prisoner upon thy parole, rescue or no rescue, as is the phrase amongst the warriors of this country? Wilt thou solemnly promise that thou wilt do so, and that at my summons thou wilt present thyself before the Abbot and Chapter at Saint Mary’s, and that thou wilt not stir from this house above a quarter of a mile in any direction? Wilt thou, I say, engage me thy word for this and such is the sure trust which I repose in thy good faith, that thou shalt remain here unharmed and unsecured, a prisoner at large, subject only to appear before our court when called upon.”

The preacher paused — “I am unwilling,” he said, “to fetter my native liberty by any self-adopted engagement. But I am already in your power, and you may bind me to my answer. By such promise, to abide within a certain limit, and to appear when called upon, I renounce not any liberty which I at present possess, and am free to exercise; but, on the contrary, being in bonds, and at your mercy, I acquire thereby a liberty which I at present possess not. I will therefore accept of thy proffer, as what is courteously offered on thy part, and may be honourably accepted on mine.”

“Stay yet,” said the Sub-Prior, “one important part of thy engagement is forgotten — thou art farther to promise, that while thou art at liberty, thou wilt not preach or teach, directly or indirectly, any of those pestilent heresies by which so many souls have been in this our day won over from the kingdom of light to the kingdom of darkness.”

“There we break off our treaty,” said Wardens, firmly. “We undo you if I preach not the Gospel!”

The Sub-Prior’s countenance became clouded,

and he again paced the apartment, and muttered, “A plague upon the self-willed fool!” then stopped short in his walk, and proceeded in his argument. — “Why, by thine own reasoning, Henry, thy refusal here is but peevish obstinacy. It is in my power to place you where your preaching can reach no human ear; in promising therefore to abstain from it, you grant nothing which you have it in your power to refuse.”

“I know not that,” replied Henry Warden; “thou mayest indeed cast me into a dungeon, but can I foretell that any Master hath not task-work for me to perform even in that dreary mansion? The chains of saints have, ere now, been the means of breaking the bonds of Satan. In a prison, holy Paul found the jailer whom he brought to believe the word of salvation, he and all his house.”

“Nay,” said the Sub-Prior, in a tone betwixt anger and scorn, “if you match yourself with the blessed Apostle, it were time we had done — prepare to endure what thy folly, as well as thy heresy, deserves. — Bind him, soldier.”

With proud submission to his fate, and regarding the Sub-Prior with something which almost amounted to a smile of superiority, the preacher placed his arms so that the bonds could be again fastened round him.

“Spare me not,” he said to Christie; “for even that ruffian hesitated to draw the cord straitly.”

The Sub-Prior, meanwhile, looked at him from under his cowl, which he had drawn over his head, and partly over his face, as if he wished to shade his own emotions. They were those of a huntsman within point-blank shot of a noble stag, who is yet too much struck with his majesty of front and of antler to take aim at him. They were those of a fowler, who, levelling his gun at a magnificent eagle, is yet reluctant to use his advantage when he sees the noble sovereign of the birds pruning himself in proud defiance of whatever may be attempted against him. The heart of the Sub-Prior (bigoted as he was) relented, and he doubted if he ought to purchase by a rigorous discharge of what he deemed his duty, the remorse he might afterwards feel for the death of one so nobly independent in thought and character, the friend, besides, of his own happiest years, during which they had, side by side, striven in the noble race of knowledge, and indulged their intervals of repose in the lighter studies of classical and general letters.

The Sub-Prior’s hand pressed his half-shaded cheek, and his eye, more completely obscured, was bent on the ground, as if to hide the workings of his relenting nature.

“Were but Edward safe from the infection,” he thought to himself — “Edward, whose eager and enthusiastic mind pressed forward in the chase of all that hath even the shadow of knowledge, I might trust this enthusiasm with the women, after due caution to them that they cannot, without guilt, attend to his reveries.”

As the Sub-Prior revolved these thoughts, and delayed the definitive order which was to determine the fate of the prisoner, a sudden noise from the entrance of the tower diverted his attention for an instant, and his cheek and brow indicated with all the signs of heat and determination, Edward Warden’s rushed into the room.

CHAPTER XXXII.

Then in my gown of amber grey
Along the mountain path I'll wander,
And wind my solitary way
To the old shrine that courts me yonder.

There, in the calm mountain shade,
All injuries may be forgiven;
And there for thee, obdurate maid,
My ardent soul rises to heaven.
The Great Lady of the Mountains.

THE first words which Edward uttered were,—"My brother is safe, venerated father—he is safe, thank God, and lives!—There is not in Corri-na-shian a grave, nor a vestige of a grave. The turf around the fountain has neither been disturbed by pick-axe, spade, nor mattock, since the deer-hair first sprang there. He lives as surely as I live!"

The earnestness of the youth—the vivacity with which he looked and moved—the springy step, outstretched hand, and ardent eye, reminded Henry Warden of Halbert, so lately his guide. The brothers had indeed a strong family resemblance, though Halbert was far more athletic and active in his person, taller and better knit in the limbs; and though Edward had, on ordinary occasions, a look of more habitual sadness and more profound reflection. The preacher was interested as well as the Sub-Prior.

"Of whom do you speak, my son?" he said, in a tone as unconcerned as if his own fate had not been, at the same instant trembling in the balance, and as if a dungeon and death did not appear to be his instant doom—"Of whom, I say, speak you! If of a youth somewhat older than you seem to be—brown-haired, open-featured, taller and stronger than you appear, yet having much of the same air and of the same tone of voice—if such a one is the brother whom you seek, it may be I can tell you news of him."

"Speak, then, for Heaven's sake," said Edward—"life or death lies on thy tongue!"

The Sub-Prior joined eagerly in the same request, and, without waiting to be urged, the preacher gave a minute account of the circumstances under which he met the elder Glendinning, with so exact a description of his person, that there remained no doubt as to his identity. When he mentioned that Halbert Glendinning had conducted him to the dell in which they found the grass bloody, and a grave newly closed, and told how the youth accused himself of the slaughter of Sir Pierce Shaddon, the Sub-Prior looked on Edward with astonishment.

"Didst thou not say, even now," he said, "that there was no vestige of a grave in that spot?"

"No more vestige of the earth having been removed than if the dirt had grown there since the days of Adam," replied Edward Glendinning. "It is true," he added, "that the adjacent grass was trampled and bloody."

"There are 'holiness of the Renny,'" said the Sub-Prior, smiling himself—"Christian men may no longer doubt of it."

"Not so," said Warden, "Christian men might better guard themselves by the sword of reason than by the lance of a spiritual spell."

"The badge of our mission," said the Sub-Prior, "cannot be understood—the sign of the cross discerned in all our actions."

"Ay," answered Henry Warden, apt and armed for controversy, "but it should be borne in the heart, not scored with the fingers in the air. That very impulsive air, through which your hand passes, shall as soon bear the imprint of your action, as the external action shall avail the fond bigot who substitutes vain motions of the body, like genuflections, and signs of the cross, from the living and heart-born duties of faith and good works."

"I pity thee," said the Sub-Prior, as actively ready for polemics as himself,—"I, pity thee, Henry, and reply not to thee. Thou mayest as well winnow forth and measure the ocean with a sieve, as mete out the power of holy words; decide, and sign, by the serring gauge of thine own reason."

"Not by mine own reason would I mete thee," said Warden; "but by His holy Word, that unshining and unerring lamp of our path, compared to which human reason is but as a glimmering and fading taper, and your boasted tradition only a misleading wild-fire. Show me your Scripture warrant for ascribing virtue to such vain signs and motions!"

"I offered thee a fair field of debate," said the Sub-Prior, "which thou didst refuse. I will not at present resume the controversy."

"Were these my last accents," said the reformer, "and were they uttered at the stake, half-choked with smoke, and as the fagots kindled into a blaze around me, with that last utterance I would testify against the superstitious devices of Rome."

The Sub-Prior suppressed with pain the controversial answer which arose to his lips, and, turning to Edward Glendinning, he said, "there could be now no doubt that his mother ought presently to be informed that her son lived."

"I told you that two hours since," said Christie of the Clinthill, "as you would have believed me. But it seems you are more willing to take the word of an old gray sinner, whose life has been spent in pattering heresy, than mine, though I never rode a foray in my life without duly saying my paternoster."

"Go then," said Father Eustace to Edward; "let thy sorrowing mother know that her son is restored to her from the grave, like the child of the widow of Zarephath; at the intercession," he added, looking at Henry Warden, "of the blessed Saint whom I invoked in his behalf."

"Deceived thyself," said Warden, instantly, "thou art a deceiver of others. It was no dead man, no creature of clay, whom the blessed Tiahbita invoked; when, stung by the reproach of the Shennanite woman, he prayed that her son's soul might come into him again."

"It was by his intercession, however," responded the Sub-Prior; "for what says the Vulgate? Thus is it written: '*Et exauduit Dominus vocem filii, et recessit an anima pueri intra eum, et revivit*;'—and thinkest thou the intercession of a glorified saint is more feeble than when he walks on earth, shrouded in a substance of clay, and seeing but with the eye of flesh?"

During this controversy Edward Glendinning appeared restless and impatient, agitated by some strong internal feeling, but whether of joy, grief, or expectation, his countenance did not expressly declare. He took no opportunity to break in upon the discourse of the Sub-Prior, who, notwithstanding his resolution to the contrary, was devoutly smiling in the spirit of controversy;

which Edward diverted by conjuring his reverence to allow him to speak a few words with him in private.

"Remove the prisoner," said the Sub-Prior to Christie; "look to him carefully that he escape not; but for thy life do him no injury."

His commands being obeyed, Edward and the monk were left alone, when the Sub-Prior thus addressed him.

"What hath come over thee, Edward, that thy eye kindles so wildly, and thy cheek is thus changing from scarlet to pale? Why didst thou break in so hastily and unadvisedly upon the argument with which I was prostrating yonder heretic? And wherefore dost thou not tell thy mother that her son is restored to her by the intercession, as Holy Church well warrants us to believe, of blessed Saint Benedict, the patron of our Order? For if ever my prayers were put forth to him with zeal, it hath been in behalf of this house, and thine eyes have seen the result—go tell it to thy mother."

"I must tell her then," said Edward, "that if she has regained one son, another is lost to her."

"What meanest thou, Edward? what language is this?" said the Sub-Prior.

"Father," said the youth, kneeling down to him, "my sin and my shame shall be told thee, and thou shalt witness my penance with thine own eyes."

"I comprehend thee not," said the Sub-Prior.

"What canst thou have done to deserve such self-accusation!—Hast thou too listened," he added, knitting his brows, "to the demon of heresy, ever most effectual tempter of those, who, like yonder unhappy man, are distinguished by their love of knowledge?"

"I am guiltless in that matter," answered Glen-dinning, "nor have presumed to think otherwise than thou, my kind father, hast taught me, and than the church allows."

"And what is it then, my son," said the Sub-Prior, kindly, "which thus afflicts thy conscience? speak it to me, that I may answer thee in the words of comfort; for the church's mercy is great to those obedient children who doubt not her power."

"My confession will require her mercy," replied Edward. "My brother Halbert—so kind, so brave, so gentle, who spoke not, thought not, acted not, but in love to me, whose hand had aided me in every difficulty, whose eye watched over me like the eagle's over her nestlings, when they prove their first flight from the eyry—this brother, so kind, so gently affectionate—I heard of his sudden, his bloody, his violent death, and I rejoiced—I heard of his unexpected restoration, and I sorrowed!"

"Edward," said the father, "thou art beside thyself—what should urge thee to such odious ingratitude!—In your hurry of spirits you have mistaken the confused tender of your feelings—Go, my son, pray and compose thy mind—we will speak of this another time."

"No, father, no," said Edward, vehemently, "now, or never!—I will find the means to tame this rebellious heart of mine, or I will tear it out of my bosom—Mistake its passions!—No, father, thou canst be mistaken for joy—All wept, all shrieked around me—my mother—the monks—all the same of my crime—all wept—and I—I could hardly disguise my brutal and insane

joy under the appearance of revenge—Brother, I said, I cannot give thee tears, but I will give thee blood—Yea, father, as I counted hour after hour, while I kept watch upon the English prisoner, and said, I am an hour nearer to hope and to happiness—"

"I understand thee not, Edward," said the monk, "nor can I conceive in what way thy brother's supposed murder should have affected thee with such unnatural joy—Surely the sordid desire to succeed him in his small possessions—"

"Perish the paltry trash!" said Edward, with the same emotion. "No, father, it was rivalry—it was jealous rage—it was the love of Mary Avenel, that rendered me the unnatural wretch I confess myself!"

"Of Mary Avenel!" said the priest—"of a lady so high above either of you in name and in rank! How dared Halbert—how dared you, to presume to lift your eye to her but in honour and respect, as a superior of another degree from yours?"

"When did love wait for the sanction of heraldry?" replied Edward; "and in what but a line of dead ancestors was Mary, our mother's guest and foster-child, different from us, with whom she was brought up!—Enough, we loved—we both loved her! But the passion of Halbert was requited. He knew it not, he saw it not—but I was sharper-eyed. I saw that even when I was more approved, Halbert was more beloved. With me she would sit for hours at our common task with the cold simplicity and indifference of a sister, but with Halbert she trusted not herself. She changed colour, she was fluttered when he approached her; and when he left her, she was sad, pensive, and solitary. I bore all this—I saw my rival's advancing progress in her affections—I bore it, father, and yet I hated him not—I could not hate him!"

"And well for thee that thou didst not," said the father; "wild and headstrong as thou art, wouldst thou hate thy brother for partaking in thine own folly?"

"Father," replied Edward, "the world esteems thee wise, and holds thy knowledge of mankind high; but thy question shows that thou hast never loved. It was by an effort that I saved myself from hating my kind and affectionate brother, who, all unsuspecting of my rivalry, was perpetually loading me with kindness. Nay, there were moods of my mind, in which I could return that kindness for a time with energetic enthusiasm. Never did I feel this so strongly as on the night which parted us. But I could not help rejoicing when he was swept from thy path—could not help sorrowing when he was again restored to be a stumbling-block in my path."

"May God be gracious to thee, my son!" said the monk; "this is an awful state of mind. Even in such evil mood did the first murderer rise up against his brother, because Abel's was the most acceptable sacrifice."

"I will wrestle with the demon which has haunted me, father," replied the youth, firmly—"I will wrestle with him, and I will subdue him. But first I must remove from the scene which are to follow here. I cannot endure that I should see Mary Avenel's eyes again flash with joy at the restoration of her lover. It were a sight to make almost a second Cain of me! My sword, father, and my

sitory joy discharged itself in a thirst to commit homicide, and how can I estimate the frenzy of my despair?"

"Madman!" said the Sub-Prior, "at what dreadful offence does thy fury drive?"

"My lot is determined, father," said Edward, in a resolute tone; "I will embrace the spiritual state which you have so oft recommended. It is my purpose to return with you to Saint Mary's, and, with the permission of the Holy Virgin and of Saint Benedict, to offer my profession to the Abbot."

"Not now, my son," said the Sub-Prior, "not in this distemperature of mind. The wise and good accept not gifts which are made in heat of blood, and which may be after repented of; and shall we make our offerings to wisdom and to goodness itself with less of solemn resolution and deep devotion of mind, than is necessary to make them acceptable to our own frail companions in this valley of darkness? This I say to thee, my son, not as meaning to deter thee from the good path thou art now inclined to prefer, but that thou mayest make thy vocation and thine election sure."

"There are actions, father," returned Edward, "which brook no delay, and this is one. It must be done this very now; or it may never be done. Let me go with you; let me not behold the return of Halbert into this house. Shame, and the sense of the injustice I have already done him, will join with these dreadful passions which urge me to do him yet farther wrong. Let me then go with you."

"With me, my son," said the Sub-Prior, "thou shalt surely go; but our rule, as well as reason and good order, require that you should dwell a space with us as a probationer, or novice, before taking upon thee those final vows, which, sequestering thee for ever from the world, dedicate thee to the service of Heaven."

"And when shall we set forth, father?" said the youth, as eagerly as if the journey which he was now undertaking led to the pleasures of a summer holiday.

"Even now, if thou wilt," said the Sub-Prior, yielding to his impetuosity—"go, then, and command them to prepare for our departure.—Yet stay," he said, as Edward, with all the awakened enthusiasm of his character, hastened from his presence, "come hither, my son, and kneel down."

Edward obeyed, and knelt down before him. Notwithstanding his slight figure and thin features, the Sub-Prior could, from the energy of his tone, and the earnestness of his devotional manner, impress his pupils and his penitents with no ordinary feelings of personal reverence. His heart always was, as well as seemed to be, in the duty which he was immediately performing; and the spiritual guide who thus shews a deep conviction of the importance of his office, seldom fails to impress a similar feeling upon his hearers. Upon such occasions as the present, his puny body seemed to assume more majestic stature—his spare and emaciated countenance bore a bolder, loftier, and more commanding port—his voice, always beautiful, trembled as labouring under the immediate impulse of the Divinity—and his whole demeanour seemed to bespeak, not the more ordinary man, but the agent of the Church in which she had vested her high power for delivering sinners from their load of iniquity.

"Hast thou, my fair son," said he, "faithfully

recounted the circumstances which have thus suddenly determined thee to a religious life?"

"The sins I have confessed, my father," answered Edward, "but I have not yet told of a strange appearance, which, acting in my mind, hath, I think, aided to determine my resolution."

"Tell it, then, now," returned the Sub-Prior; "it is thy duty to leave me uninstructed in naught, so that thereby I may understand the temptation that besets thee."

"I tell it with unwillingness," said Edward; "for although, God wot, I speak but the mere truth, yet even while my tongue speaks it as truth, my own ears receive it as fable."

"Yet say the whole," said Father Eustace; "neither fear rebuke from me, seeing I may know reasons for receiving as true that which others might regard as fabulous."

"Know, then, father," replied Edward, "that betwixt hope and despair—and, heavens! what a hope!—the hope to find the corpse mangled and crushed lastly in amongst the bloody clay which the foot of the scornful victor had trod down upon my good, my gentle, my courageous brother,—I sped to the glen called Curri-nan-shian; but, as your reverence has been already informed, neither the grave, which my unhallowed wishes had in spite of my better self longed to see, nor any appearance of the earth having been opened, was visible in the solitary spot where Martin had, at morning yesterday, seen the fatal hillock. You know our dalesmen, father. The place hath an evil name, and this deception of the sight inclined them to leave it. My companions became affrighted, and hastened down the glen as men caught in trespass. My hopes were too much blighted, my mind too much agitated, to fear either the living or the dead. I descended the glen more slowly than they, often looking back, and not ill pleased with the poltroonery of my companions, which left me to my own perplexed and moody humour, and induced them to hasten into the broader dale. They were already out of sight, and lost amongst the windings of the glen, when, looking back, I saw a female form standing beside the fountain——"

"How, my fair son?" said the Sub-Prior, "be ware you jest not with your present situation!"

"I jest not, father," answered the youth; "it may be I shall never jest again—surely not for many a day. I saw, I say, the form of a female clad in white, such as the Spirit which haunts the house of Avenel is supposed to be. Believe me, my father, for, by heaven and earth, I saw nought but what I saw with these eyes!"

"I believe thee, my son," said the monk; "proceed in thy strange story."

"The apparition," said Edward, Glendinning, "sung, and thus run her lay; for, strange as it may seem to you, her words abide by my remembrance as if they had been sung to me from infancy upward:

"Thou who lookest my fountain lone;
With thoughts and hopes thou dost not own;
When heart within leap'd wildly glad
When most his brow seem'd dark and sad
Hie thee back, thou find'st it not but
Corpse or coffin, grave or tomb;
The Dead Alive is gone and dead—
Go thou, and join the Living Dead!"

"The Living Dead, what shall I say
Oh shroud me! shroud me! as thou hast now,
When heart within me leapt and glad
Oh passion by their words inspired!"

Where, under sad and solemn show,
Vain hopes are nursed, wild wishes glow,
Tweak the convent's vaulted room,
Prayer and sigh be thy doom;
Lull the green, and den the gray.
To the cloister hence away!"

"'Tis a wild lay," said the Sub-Prior, "as I chanted, I fear me, with no good end. But we have power to turn the machinations of Satan to his shame. Edward, thou shalt go; with me as thou desirest; thou shalt prove the life for which I have long thought thee best fitted—thou shalt aid, my son, this trembling hand of mine to sustain the Holy Ark, which bold unhallowed men press rashly forward to touch and to profane.—Wilt thou not first see thy mother?"

"I will see no one," said Edward, hastily; "I will risk nothing that may shake the purpose of my heart. From Saint Mary's they shall learn my destination—all of them shall learn it. My mother—Mary Avenel—my rector and happy brother—they shall all know that Edward lives no longer to the world to be a clog on their happiness. Mary shall no longer need to constrain her looks and expressions to coldness because I am nigh. She shall no longer—"

"My son," said the Sub-Prior, interrupting him, "it is not by looking back on the vanities and vanities of this world, that we fit ourselves for the discharge of duties which are not of it. Go, get our horses ready, and, as we descend the glen together, I will teach thee the truths through which the fathers and wise men of old had that precious solatium, which can convert suffering into happiness."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Now, on my faith, this gear is all entangled,
Like to the yarn-clew of the drowsy fluffier.
Brought by the frolic kitten through the cabin,
While the good dame sits nodding o'er the fire!
Mistaken, attend; 'twill crave some skill to clear it.

Old Hay.

Edward, with the speed of one who doubts the steadiness of his own resolution, hastened to prepare the horses for their departure, and at the same time thanked and dismissed the neighbours who had come to his assistance, and who were not a little surprised both at the suddenness of his proposed departure, and at the terse affairs had taken.

"Here's cold hospitality," quoth Dan of the Howlat-hirst to his comrades; "I trow the Glendinning's may die and come alive right off, ere I put foot in stirrup again for the matter."

Martin soothed them by placing food and liquor before them. They ate sullenly, however, and departed in bad humour.

The joyful news that Halbert Glendinning lived, was quickly communicated through the sorrowing family. The mother wept and thanked Heaven alternately; until her habits of domestic economy awakening as her feelings became calmer, she observed, "It would be an unbecoming task to mend the yoke, and what were they to do while they were broken in that fashion? At open doors dogs come in."

This remark,—"This eye thought Halbert was over glad at his escape to be killed one easily by any Sir Percie of them a'." They might say of

these Southrons as they liked; but they had not the pith and wind of a canny Scot, when it came to close grips."

On Mary Avenel the impression was inconceivably deeper. She had but newly learned to pray, and it seemed to her that her prayers had been instantly answered—that the compassion of Heaven, which she had learned to implore in the words of Scripture, had descended upon her after a manner almost miraculous, and recalled the dead from the grave at the sound of her lamentations. There was a dangerous degree of enthusiasm in this strain of feeling, but it originated in the purest devotion.

A silk and embroidered muffler, one of the few articles of more costly attire which she possessed, was devoted to the purpose of wrapping up and concealing the sacred volume, which henceforth she was to regard as her chief treasure, lamenting only that, for want of a fitting inter-protector, much must remain to her a book flooded and a fountain sealed. She was unaware of the yet greater danger she incurred, of putting an imperfect or even false sense upon some of the doctrines which appeared most comprehensible. But Heaven had provided against both these hazards.

While Edward was preparing the horses, Christie of the Clirithill again solicited his orders respecting the reformed preacher, Henry Warden, and again the worthy monk laboured to reconcile in his own mind the compassion and esteem which, almost in spite of him, he could not help feeling for his former companion, with the duty which he owed to the church. The unexpected resolution of Edward had removed, he thought, the chief objection to his being left at Glendurg.

"If I carry this Wellwood, or Warden, to the Monastery," he thought, "he must die—he is in his heresy—perish body and soul: And though such a measure was once thought advisable, to strike terror into the heretics, yet such is now their daily increasing strength, that it may rather rouse them to fury and to revenge. True, he refuses to pledge himself to abstain from sowing his tares among the wheat; but the ground here is too barren to receive them. I fear not his making impression on these poor women, the vassals of the church, and bred up in due obedience to her behests. The keen, searching, inquiring, and bold disposition of Edward might have afforded fuel to the fire; but that is removed, and there is nothing left which the flames may catch on.—Thus shall he have no power to spread his evil doctrines abroad, and yet his life shall be preserved, and it may be his soul rescued as a prey from the fowler's net. I will myself contend with him in argument; for when we studied in common, I yielded not to him, and surely the cause for which I struggle will support me, were I yet more weak than I often am." With this quest restrained from his errors, an hundred-fold more advantage would arise to the church from his spiritual regeneration, than from his temporal death.

Having finished these reflections, in which there was at once goodness of disposition and narrowness of principle, a considerable portion of self-satisfaction, and no small degree of satisfaction, the Sub-Prior commanded the porter to be brought into his presence.

"Henry," he said, "whatever a right name of thy may demand of me, without delay and

Christian companion forbid me to bind thee to unneeded death. Then wert wont to be generous, though stern and stubborn in thy resolve; let not thy sense of what thine own thoughts term duty, draw thee further than mine have done. Remember, that every sheep whom thou shalt here lead astray from the fold, will be demanded in time and through eternity of him who hath left thee the liberty of doing such evil. I ask no engagement of thee, save that thou remain a prisoner on thy word at this tower, and wilt appear when summoned."

"Then hast found an invention to bind my hands," replied the preacher, "more sure than would have been the heaviest shackles in the prison of thy convent. I will not rashly do what may endanger thee with thy unhappy superiors, and I will be the more cautious, because, if we had farther opportunity of conference, I trust thine own soul may yet be rescued as a brand from the burning, and that, casting from thee the livery of Anti-Christ, that tender in human sins and human souls, I may yet assist thee to lay hold on the Rock of Ages."

The Sub-Prior heard the sentiment, so similar to that which had occurred to himself, with the same kindly feelings with which the game-cock hears and replies to the challenge of his rival.

"I bless God and Our Lady," said he, drawing himself up, "that my faith is already anchored on that Rock on which Saint Peter founded his church." "It is a perversion of the text," said the eager Henry Warden, "grounded on a vain play upon words—a most idle periphrasis."

The controversy would have been rekindled, and in all probability—for what can insure the good temper and moderation of polemics!—might have ended in the preacher's being transported a captive to the Monastery, had not Christie of the Clintchill observed that it was growing late, and that he having to descend the glen, which had no good reputation, cared not greatly for travelling there after sunset. The Sub-Prior, therefore, stifled his desire of argument, and again telling the preacher, that he trusted to his gratitude and generosity, he bade him farewell.

"Be assured, mine old friend," replied Warden, "that no willing set of mine shall be to thy prejudice. But if my Master shall place work before me, I must obey God rather than man."

These two men, both excellent from natural disposition and acquired knowledge, had more points of similarity than they themselves would have admitted. In truth, the chief dissimilarity betwixt them was, that the Catholic, defending a religion which afforded little interest to the feelings, had, in his devotion to the cause he espoused, more of the head than of the heart, and was politic, cautious, and careful; while the Protestant, acting under the strong impulse of men lately adopted conviction, and feeling, as he justly might, a more animated confidence in his cause, was enthusiastic, eager, and precipitate in his desire to advance it. The priest would have been estimated to defend the preacher against a commoner, still, of course, the impulse by which the latter was governed, was more active and more decisive. They could not part from each other without a mutual pressure of hands, and each looked to the face of his old companion, as he bade him adieu, with a countenance strongly expressive of sorrow, affection, and pity.

Richard Warden then explained briefly to Dame

Glendinning, that this person was to be her guest for some days, forbidding her and her whole household, under high spiritual censures, to hold any conversation with him on religious subjects, but commanding her to attend to his wants in all other particulars.

"May Our Lady forgive me, reverend father," said Dame Glendinning, somewhat dismayed at this intelligence, "but I must needs say, that over many guests have been the ruin of many a house, and I trow they will bring down Glendearg. First came the Lady of Avalon—(her soul be at rest—she meant me ill)—but she brought with her as many bogles and fairies, as has kept the house in case ever since, so that we have been living as it were in a dream. And then came that English knight, if it please you, and if he hama killed my son outright, he has chased him off the gate, and it may be long enough ere I see him again,—forby the damage done to outer door and inner door. And now your reverence has given me the charge of a hostile, who, it is like, may bring the great horned devil himself down upon us all; and they say that it is neither door nor window will serve him, but he will take away the side of the auld tower along with him. Nevertheless, reverend father, your pleasure is doubtless to be done to our power."

"Go to, woman," said the Sub-Prior; "send for workmen from the clachan, and let them charge the expense of their repairs to the Community, and I will give the treasurer warrant to allow them. Moreover, in settling the rental mails, and feu-duties, thou shalt have allowance for the trouble and charges to which thou art now put, and I will cause strict search to be made after thy son."

The dame burst deep and low at each favourable expression; and when the Sub-Prior had done speaking, she added her farther hope that the Sub-Prior would hold some communing with her gossip the Miller, concerning the fate of his daughter, and expound to him that the chance had by no means happened through any negligence on her part.

"I sair doubt me, father," she said, "whether Mysie finds her way back to the Mill in a hurry; but it was all her father's own fault that he has run lampering about the country, riding on bare-backed naigs, and never setting to do a turn of work within doors, unless it were to dress debates at dinner-time for his ain kyte."

"You remind me, dame, of another matter of urgency," said Father Eustace; "and, God knows, too many of them press on me at this moment. This English knight must be sought out, and explanation given to him of these most strange chances. The giddy girl must also be recovered. If she hath suffered in reputation by this unhappy mistake, I will not hold myself innocent of the damage. Yet how to find them out I know not."

"So please you," said Christie of the Clintchill, "I am willing to take the chase, and bring them back by fair means or foul; for though you have always looked as black as night to me, whenever we have gathered, yet I have not forgotten that had it not been for you, my neck would have bore the weight of my four quarters. If any man can track the tread of them, I will say in the face of both Mars and Tevotilla, and take the Forest to boot, I am that man. But first I have matters to treat of an my master's story, if you will permit me to ride about the glen with you."

"Nay, but, my friend," said the Sub-Prior, "thou shouldst remember I have but slender cause to trust thee for a companion through a place so solitary."
 "Tush! tush!" said the Jackman, "fear me not; I had the worst too surely to begin that sport again. Besides, have I not said a dozen of times, I owe you a life! and when I owe a man either a good turn or a bad, I never fail to pay it sooner or later. Moreover, bestrew me if I care to go alone, down the glen, or even with my troopers, who are, every loon of them, as much devil's bairns as myself; whereas, if your reverence, since that is the word, take beads and psalter, and I come along with jack and spear, you will make the devils take the air, and I will make all human enemies take the earth."

Edward here entered, and told his reverence that his horse was prepared. At this instant his eye caught his mother's, and the resolution which he had so strongly formed was staggered when he recollected the necessity of bidding her farewell. The Sub-Prior saw his embarrassment, and came to his relief.

"Dame," said he, "I forgot to mention that your son Edward goes with me to Saint Mary's, and will not return for two or three days."

"You'll be wishing to help him to recover his brother! May the saints reward your kindness!"

The Sub-Prior returned the benediction which, in this instance, he had not very well deserved, and he and Edward set forth on their route. They were presently followed by Christie, who came up with his followers at such a speedy pace, as intimated sufficiently that his wish to obtain spiritual convoy through the glen, was extremely sincere. He had, however, other matters to stimulate his speed, for he was desirous to communicate to the Sub-Prior a message from his master Julian, connected with the delivery of the prisoner Warden; and having requested the Sub-Prior to ride with him a few yards before Edward, and the troopers of his own party, he thus addressed him, sometimes interrupting his discourse in a manner testifying that his fear of supernatural beings was not altogether lulled to rest by his confidence in the sanctity of his fellow-traveller.

"My master," said the rider, "deemed he had sent you an acceptable gift in that old heretic preacher; but it seems, from the slight care you have taken of him, that you make small account of the boon."

"Nay," said the Sub-Prior, "do not thus judge of it. The Community must account highly of the service, and will reward it to thy master in goodly fashion. But this man and I are old friends, and I trust to bring him back from the paths of perdition."

"Nay," said the moss-trooper, "when I saw you shake hands at the beginning, I counted that you would fight it all out in love and honour, and that there would be no extreme dealings betwixt ye—however it is all one to my master—Saint Mary! what call you yon, Sir Monk!"

"The branch of a willow streaming across the path betwixt us and the sky."

"Bestrew me," said Christie, "if it looked not like a man's hand holding a sword.—But touching my master, he, like a prudent man, hath kept him safe, and in these broken times, until he could see what was to be done, what footing he was to stand upon. Right tempting offers he hath had from the Lords of

Congregation, whom you call heretics; and at one time he was minded, to be plain with you, to have taken their way—for he was assured that the Lord James¹ was coming this road at the head of a round body of cavalry. And accordingly Lord James did so far reckon upon him, that he sent this man Warden, or whatsoever be his name, to my master's protection, as an assured friend; and, moreover, with tidings that he himself was marching hitherward at the head of a strong body of horse."

"Now, Our Lady forefend!" said the Sub-Prior.

"Amen!" answered Christie, in some trepidation, "did your reverence see aught?"

"Nothing whatever," replied the monk; "it was thy tale which wrested from me that exclamation."

"And it was some cause," replied he of the Clinthill, "for if Lord James should come hither, your Hallidome would smoke for it. But be of good cheer—that expedition is ended before it was begun. The Baron of Avenel had sure news that Lord James has been fain to march westward with his merry-men, to protect Lord Semple against Cassila and the Kennedies. By my faith, it will cost him a brush; for woe ye what they say of that name,—

"Twixt Wigton and the town of Ayr,
 Portpatrick and the crags of Cree,
 No man need think for to hide there,
 Unless he court Saint Kennedy!"

"Then," said the Sub-Prior, "the Lord James's purpose of coming southwards being broken, cost this person, Henry Warden, a cold reception at Avenel Castle."

"It would not have been altogether so rough a one," said the moss-trooper; "for my master was in heavy thought what to do in these unsettled times, and would scarce have hazarded misusing a man sent to him by so terrible a leader as the Lord James. But, to speak the truth, some busy devil tempted the old man to meddle with my master's Christian liberty of hand-fasting with Catherine of Newport. So that broke the wand of peace between them, and now ye may have my master, and all the force he can make, at your devotion, for Lord James never forgave wrong done to him; and if he come by the upper hand, he will have Julian's head if there were never another of the name, as it is like there is not, excepting the bit slip of a lame yeoman. And now I have told you more of my master's affairs than he would thank me for; but you have done me a frank turn once, and I may need one at your hands again."

"Thy frankness," said the Sub-Prior, "shall surely advantage thee; for much it concerns the church in these broken times to know the purposes and motives of those around us. But what is it that thy master expects from us in reward of good service; for I esteem him one of those who are not willing to work without their hire?"

"Nay, that I can tell you truly; for Lord James had promised him, in case he would be of his faction in these parts, an easy task of the thing eleven of his own Barony of Avenel, together with the lands of Cranberry-moor, which he possessed with his own. And he will look for no less at your hand."

"But there is old Gilbert of Cranberry-moor," said the Sub-Prior, "what are ye to make of him? The heretic Lord James may take on him to depose upon the goods and lands of the Hallidome at

¹ Lord James Stewart, afterwards the Regent Murray.

his pleasure, because, doubtless, but for the protection of God, and the heronage which yet remain faithful to their creed, he may despoil us of them by force; but while they are the property of the community, we may not take standings from ancient and faithful vassals, to gratify the covetousness of those who serve God only from the lure of gain."

"By the mass," said Christie, "it is well talking, Sir Priest; but when ye consider that Gilbert has but two half-starved cowardly peasants to follow him, and only an auld jaded avarer to ride upon, fitter for the plough than for manly service; and that the Baron of Avenel never rides with fewer than ten jackmen at his back, and oftener with fifty, hedin in all that affairs to war as if they were to do battle for a kingdom, and mounted on nags that nicker at the clank of a sword as if it were the clank of the lid of a corn-chest—I say, when ye have computed all this, you may guess which course will best serve your Monastery."

"Friend," said the monk, "I would willingly purchase thy master's assistance on his own terms, since times leave us no better means of defence against the sacrilegious spoliation of heresy; but to take from a poor man his patrimony—"

"For that matter," said the rider, "his seat would scarce be a soft one, if my master thought that Gilbert's interest stood betwixt him and what he wishes. The Halldome has land enough, and Gilbert may be quartered elsewhere."

"We will consider the possibility of so disposing the matter," said the monk, "and will expect in consequence your master's most active assistance, with all the followers he can make, to join in the defence of the Halldome, against any force by which it may be threatened."

"A man's hand and a mailed glove on that," said the jackman. "They call us marauders, thieves, and what not; but the side we take we hold by.—And I will be blithe when my Baron comes to a point which side he will take, for the castle is a kind of hell, (Our Lady forgive me for naming such a word in this place!) while he is in his abode, studying how he may best advantage himself. And now, Heaven be praised, we are in the open valley, and I may swear a round oath, should anight happen to prove it."

"My friend," said the Sub-Prior, "thou hast little merit in abstaining from oaths or blasphemy, if it be only out of fear of evil spirits."

"Nay, I am not quite a church vessel yet," said the jackman, "and if you link the curb too tight on a young horse, I promise you he will rear.—Why, it is much for me to forgo old customs on any account whatever."

The night being fine, they forded the river at the spot where the Sacristan met with his unhappy encounter with the night. As soon as they arrived at the gate of the Monastery, the porter in waiting eagerly exclaimed, "Reverend father, the Lord Abbot is most anxious for your presence."

"Let these strangers be carried to the great hall," said the Sub-Prior, "and to be treated with the best by the abbey; regarding them, however, of that modesty and decency of conduct which becometh guests in a house like this."

"But the Lord Abbot demands you instantly, my venerable brother," said Father Philip, arriving

in great haste. "I have not seen him more discouraged or desolate of counsel since the field of Pinkie-clough was stricken."

"I come, my good brother; I come," said Father Eustace. "I pray thee, good brother, let this youth, Edward Haddington, be conveyed to the Chamber of the Novices, and placed under their instructor. God hath touched his heart, and he proposeth laying aside the vanities of the world, to become a brother of our holy order; which, if his good parts be matched with fitting docility and humility, he may one day live to adorn."

"My very venerable brother," exclaimed old Father Nicholas, who came hobbling with a third summons to the Sub-Prior, "I pray thee to hasten to our worshipful Lord Abbot. The holy patroness be with us! I never saw I Abbot of the House of Saint Mary's in such consternation; and yet I remember me well when Father Ingeirum had the news of Flodden-field."

"I come, I come, venerable brother," said Father Eustace.—And having repeatedly ejaculated "I come!" he at last went to the Abbot in good earnest.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

It is not texts will do it.—Church artillery
Are silenced soon by real ordnance,
And canons are but vain opposed to cannon.
Go, coin your crosser, melt your church plate down,
Hid the starved soldier banquet in your halls,
And quaff your long-saved hogheads.—Turn them out
Thus primed with your good-sheer, to guard your wall,
And they will venture for't.—

Old Play.

THE Abbot received his counsellor with a tremendous eagerness of welcome, which announced to the Sub-Prior an extreme agitation of spirits, and the utmost need of good counsel. There was neither mazer-dish nor standing-cup upon the little table, at the elbow of his huge chair of state; his hands alone lay there, and it seemed as if he had been telling them in his extremity of distress. Beside the bench was placed the mitre of the Abbot, of an antique form, and blazing with precious stones, and the rich and highly-embossed crosser rested against the same table.

The Sacristan and old Father Nicholas had followed the Sub-Prior into the Abbot's apartment, perhaps with the hope of learning something of the important matter which seemed to be in hand.—They were not mistaken; for, after having undressed in the Sub-Prior, and being themselves in the act of retiring, the Abbot made them a signal to remain.

"My brethren," he said, "it is well known to you with what painful zeal we have overseen the weighty affairs of this house committed to our unworthy hand—your bread hath been given to you, and your water hath been sure—I have not wasted the revenues of the Convent on vain pleasures, as hunting or hawking, or in change of rich cope or sh, or in feasting idle hands and jades, saving those who, according to old wont, were received in time of Christmas and Easter. Neither have I enriched either male or female with strange women, at the expense of the Sacristy."

"There hath not been such a Lord Abbot," said Father Nicholas, "to my knowledge, since the days of Abbot Ingelram, who—"

At that portentous word, which always preluded a long story, the Abbot broke in.

"May God have mercy on his soul!—we talk not of him now.—What I would know of ye, my brethren, is, whether I have, in your mind, faithfully discharged the duties of mine office?"

"There has never been subject of complaint," answered the Sub-Prior.

The Sacristan, more diffuse, enumerated the various acts of indulgence and kindness which the mild government of Abbot Boniface had conferred on the brotherhood of Saint Mary's—the *indulgentia*—the *gratias*—the *biberes*—the weekly mess of boiled almonds—the enlarged accommodation of the refectory—the better arrangement of the cellarage—the improvement of the revenue of the Monastery—the diminution of the privations of the brethren.

"You might have added, my brother," said the Abbot, listening with melancholy acquiescence to the detail of his own merits, "that I caused to be built that curious screen, which secureth the cloisters from the north-east wind.—But all these things avail nothing.—As we read in holy Maccabees, *Capta est civitas per voluntatem Dei*. It hath cost me no little thought, no common toil, to keep these weighty matters in such order as you have seen them—there was both barn and binn to be kept full—Infirmary, dormitory, guest-hall, and refectory, to be looked to—processions to be made, confessions to be heard, strangers to be entertained, *respite* to be granted or refused; and I warrant me, when every one of you was asleep in your cell, the Abbot hath lain awake for a full hour by the bell, thinking how these matters might be ordered seemly and suitably."

"May we ask, reverend my lord," said the Sub-Prior, "what additional care has now been thrown upon you, since your discourse seems to point that way?"

"Marry, this it is," said the Abbot. "The talk is not now of *biberes*, or of *carbas*, or of boiled almonds, but of an English band coming against us from Hexham, commanded by Sir John Foster; war is it of the screening us from the east wind, but how to escape Lord James Stewart, who cometh to lay waste and destroy with his heretic soldiers."

"I thought that purpose had been broken by the feud between Semple and the Kennedies," said the Sub-Prior, hastily.

"They have accorded that matter at the expense of the church as usual," said the Abbot; "the Earl of Camilla is to have the teind-sheaves of his lands, which were given to the house of Croisraguel, and he has stricken hands with Stewart, who is now called Murray.—*Principes convenerunt eam adversus Dynastum*.—There are the letters."

The Sub-Prior took the letters, which had come by an express messenger from the Primate of Scotland, who still laboured to uphold the tottering fabric of the system under which he was at length buried, and, stepping towards the lamp, read them with an air of deep and settled attention—the Sacristan and Father Nicholas looked as helplessly at each other, as the denizens of the poultry yard when the hawk soars over it. The Abbot seemed bowed down with the extremity of sorrowful apprehension, but kept his eye timorously fixed on the Sub-Prior,

as if striving to catch some comfort from the expression of his countenance. When at length he beheld that, after a second intent perusal of the letters, he remained still silent and full of thought, he asked him in an anxious tone, "What is to be done?"

"Our duty must be done," answered the Sub-Prior, "and the rest is in the hands of God."

"Our duty—our duty?" answered the Abbot, impatiently; "doubtless we are to do our duty! but what is that duty? or how will it serve us?—Will bell, book, and candle, drive back the English heretics? or will Murray ease for palms and anti-phonaire? or can I fight for the Halidome, like Judas Maccabeus, against those profane Nicanors? or send the Sacristan against this new Holofernnes, to bring back his head in a basket?"

"True, my Lord Abbot," said the Sub-Prior, "we cannot fight with casual weapons, it is alike contrary to our habit and vow; but we can dig for our Convent land for our Order. Besides, we can arm those who will and can fight. The English are but few in number, trusting, as it would seem, that they will be joined by Murray, whose march has been interrupted. If Foster, with his Cumberland and Hexham bandits, ventures to march into Scotland, to pillage and despoil our House, we will levy our vassals, and, I trust, shall be found strong enough to give him battle."

"In the blessed name of Our Lady," said the Abbot, "think you that I am Petrus Eremita, to go forth the leader of an host?"

"Nay," said the Sub-Prior, "let some man skilled in war lead our people—there is Julian Avenel, an approved soldier."

"But a scoffer, a debauched person, and, in brief, a man of Belial," quoth the Abbot.

"Still," said the monk, "we must use his ministry in that to which he has been brought up. We can guerdon him richly, and indeed I already know the price of his service. The English, it is expected, will presently set forth, hoping here to seize upon Piercie Shipton, whose refuge being taken with us, they make the pretext of this unheard-of inroad."

"Is it even so?" said the Abbot; "I never judged that his body of satin and his brain of feathers boded us much good."

"Yet we must have his assistance, if possible," said the Sub-Prior; "he may interest in our behalf the great Pierce, of whose friendship he boasts, and that good and faithful Lord may break Foster's purpose. I will despatch the Jackman after him with all speed.—Chiefly, however, I trust to the military spirit of the land, which will not suffer peace to be easily broken on the frontier. Credit me, my lord, it will bring to our side the hands of many, whose hearts may have gone astray after strange doctrines. The great chiefs and barons will be ashamed to let the vassals of peaceful monks fight unaided against the old enemies of Scotland."

"It may be," said the Abbot, "that Foster will wait for Murray, whose purpose hitherward is but delayed for a short space."

"By the road, he will not," said the Sub-Prior; "we knew this Sir John Foster—a possant heretic. he will long to destroy the church.—born a Borderer he will thirst to plunder bag of her wealth.—a Border-pardner, he will be eager to ride in Scotland. There are too many causes to urge him on. If he joins with Murray, he will have at hand but an auxiliary's share of the spoil—if he comes hither

¹ See Note M. *Indulgentia* of the Monks.

before him, he will reckon on the whole harvest of depredation as his own. Julian Avenel also has, as I have heard, some spite against Sir John Foster; they will fight, when they meet, with double determination. — Sacristan, send for our bailiff — Where is the roll of fencible men liable to do suit and service to the Hallidome? — Send off to the Baron of Minsallot; he can raise threescore horse and better — Say to him the Monastery will compound with him for the customs of his bridge, which have been in controversy, if he will shew himself a friend at such a point. — And now, my lord, let us compute our possible numbers, and those of the enemy, that human blood be not spilled in vain — Let us therefore calculate —”

“My brain is dizzied with the emergency,” said the poor Abbot — “I am not, I think, more a coward than others, so far as my own person is concerned; but speak to me of marching and collecting soldiers, and calculating forces, and you may as well tell of it to the youngest novice of a nunnery. But my resolution is taken. — Brethren,” he said, rising up, and coming forward with the dignity which his comely person enabled him to assume, “hear for the last time the voice of your Abbot Boniface. I have done for you the best that I could; in quieter times I had perhaps done better, for it was for quiet that I sought the cloister, which has been to me a place of turmoil, as much as if I had sat in the receipt of custom, or ridden forth as leader of an armed host. But now matters turn worse and worse, and I, as I grow old, am less able to struggle with them. Also, it becomes me not to hold a place, whereof the duties, through my default or misfortune, may be but imperfectly filled by me. Wherefore I have resolved to demit this mine high office, so that the order of these matters may presently devolve upon Father Eustatius. I see present, our well-beloved Sub-Prior; and I now rejoice that he hath not been provided according to his merits elsewhere, seeing that I well hope he will succeed to the mitre and staff which it is my present purpose to lay down.”

“In the name of Our Lady, do nothing hastily, my lord!” said Father Nicholas — “I do remember that when the worthy Abbot Ingelram, being in his ninetieth year — for I warrant you he could remember when Benedict the Thirteenth was deposed — and being ill at ease and bed-ridden, the brethren rounded in his ear that he were better resign his office. And what said he, being a pleasant man? I tarry, that while he could crook his little finger he would keep hold of the crozier with it.”

The Sacristan also strongly remonstrated against the resolution of his Superior, and set down the instability he pleaded to the native modesty of his disposition. The Abbot listened in downcast silence; even Father Eustatius could not win his ear.

Father Eustatius took a sabbler town with his discomfited and dejected Superior. “My Lord Abbot,” he said, “if I have been silent concerning the virtues with which you have governed this house, do not think that I am unaware of them. I know that no man ever brought to your high office a more sincere wish to do well to all mankind; and if your rule has not been marked by the bold lines which sometimes distinguished your spiritual predecessors, their faults have equally been strangers to your character.”

“I did not believe,” said the Abbot, turning his

looks to Father Eustatius with some surprise, “that you, father, of all men, would have done me this justice.”

“In your absence,” said the Sub-Prior, “I have even done it more fully. Do not lose the good opinion which all men entertain of you, by renouncing your office when your care is most needed.”

“But, my brother,” said the Abbot, “I leave a more able in my place.”

“That you do not,” said Eustatius, “because it is not necessary you should resign, in order to possess the use of whatever experience or talent I may be accounted master of. I have been long enough in this profession to know that the individual qualities which any of us may have, are not his own, but the property of the Community, and only so far useful when they promote the general advantage. If you care not in person, my lord, to deal with this troublesome matter, let me implore you to go instantly to Edinburgh, and make what friends you can in our behalf, while I in your absence will, as Sub-Prior, do my duty in defence of the Hallidome. If I succeed, may the honour and praise be yours, and if I fail, let the disgrace and shame be mine own.”

The Abbot paused for a space, and then replied, — “No, Father Eustatius, you shall not conquer me by your generosity. In times like these, this house must have a stronger pilotage than my weak hands afford; and he who steers the vessel must be chief of the crew. Shame were it to accept the praise of other men’s labours; and, in my poor mind, all the praise which can be bestowed on him who undertakes a task so perilous and perplexing, is a meed beneath his merits. Misfortune to him would deprive him of an iota of it! Assume, therefore, your authority to-night, and proceed in the preparations you judge necessary. Let the Chapter be summoned to-morrow after we have heard mass, and all shall be ordered as I have told you. Benedicite, my brethren! — peace be with you! May the new Abbot-expectant sleep as sound as he who is about to resign his mitre.”

They retired, affected even to tears. The good Abbot had shewn a point of his character to which they were strangers. Even Father Eustatius had held his spiritual Superior hitherto as a good-humoured, indolent, self-indulgent man, whose chief merit was the absence of gross faults; so that this sacrifice of power to a sense of duty, even if a little allowed by the meaner motives of fear and apprehended difficulties, raised him considerably in the Sub-Prior’s estimation. He even felt an aversion to profit by the resignation of the Abbot Boniface, and in a manner to rise on his ruins; but this sentiment did not long contend with those which led him to recollect higher considerations. It could not be denied that Boniface was entirely unfit for his situation in the present crisis; and the Sub-Prior felt that he himself, acting merely as a delegate, could not well take the decisive measures which the time required; the well of the Community therefore demanded his elevation. If, besides, there crept in a feeling of a high dignity obtained, and the native exultation of a haughty spirit called to contend with the imminent dangers attached to a post of such distinction, these sentiments were so cunningly blended and amalgamated with others of a more disinterested nature, that, as the Sub-Prior himself was unconscious of their agency, we, who have a regard for him, are not solicitous to detect it.

The Abbot elect carried himself with more dignity than formerly, when giving such directions as the pressing circumstances of the times required; and those who approached him could perceive an unusual kindling of his falcon eye, and an unusual flush upon his pale and faded cheek. With briefness and precision he wrote and dictated various letters to different barons, acquainting them with the meditated invasion of the Halidome by the English, and counselling them to lend aid and assistance as in a common cause. The temptation of advantage was held out to those whom he judged less sensible of the cause of honour, and all were urged by the motives of patriotism and ancient animosity to the English. The time had been when no such exhortations would have been necessary. But so essential was Elizabeth's aid to the reformed party in Scotland, and so strong was that party almost every where, that there was reason to believe a great many would observe neutrality on the present occasion, even if they did not go the length of uniting with the English against the Catholics.

When Father Eustace considered the number of the immediate vassals of the church whose aid he might legally command, his heart sunk at the thoughts of ranking them under the banner of the fierce and profligate Julian Avenel.

"Were the young enthusiast Halbert Glendinning to be found," thought Father Eustace in his anxiety, "I would have risked the battle under his leading, young as he is, and with better hope of God's blessing. But the bailiff is now too infirm, nor know I a chief of name whom I might trust in this important matter better than this Avenel."—He touched a bell which stood on the table, and commanded Christie of the Clinthill to be brought before him.—"Thou owest me a life," said he to that person on his entrance, "and I may do thee another good turn if thou be'st sincere with me."

Christie had already drained two standing-cups of wine, which would, on another occasion, have added to the insolence of his familiarity. But at present there was something in the augmented dignity of manner of Father Eustace, which imposed a restraint on him. Yet his answers partook of his usual character of undaunted assurance. He professed himself willing to return a true answer to all inquiries.

"Has the Baron (so styled) of Avenel any friendship with Sir John Foster, Warden of the West Marches of England?"

"Such friendship as is between the wild-cat and the terrier," replied the rider.

"Will he do battle with him should they meet?"

"As surely," answered Christie, "as ever cock fought on Shrovetide-even."

"And would he fight with Foster in the Church's quarrel?"

"On any quarrel, or upon no quarrel whatever," replied the jackman.

"We will then write to him, letting him know, that if upon occasion of an apprehended incursion by Sir John Foster he will agree to join his force with ours, he shall lead our men, and be gratified for doing so to the extent of his wish.—Yet one word more—Thou didst say thou couldst find out where the English knight Pierce Shafton has this day fled to?"

"That I can, and bring him back too, by fair means or force, as best likes your reverence."

"No force must be used upon him. within what time wilt thou find him out?"

"Within thirty hours, so he have not crossed the Lothian firth—If it is to do you a pleasure, I will set off directly, and wind him as a sleuth-dog tracks the moss-trooper," answered Christie.

"Bring him hither then, and thou wilt deserve good at our hands, which I may soon have free means of bestowing on thee."

"Thanks to your reverence, I put myself in your reverence's hands. We of the spear and snaffle walk something recklessly through life; but if a man were worse than he is, your reverence knows he must live, and that's not to be done without shifting, I trow."

"Peace, Sir, and begone on thine errand—thou shalt have a letter from us to Sir Pierce."

Christie made two steps towards the door; then turning back and hesitating, like one who would make an impertinent pleasantry if he dared, he asked what he was to do with the wench Mysie Happer, whom the Southron knight had carried off with him.

"Am I to bring her hither, please your reverence?"

"Hither, you malapert knave!" said the churchman; "remember you to whom you speak?"

"No offence meant," replied Christie; "but if such is not your will, I would carry her to Avenel Castle, where a well-favoured wench was never unwelcome."

"Bring the unfortunate girl to her father's, and break no scurril jests here," said the Sub-Prior—"See that thou guide her in all safety and honour."

"In safety, surely," said the rider, "and in such honour as her outbreak has left her.—I bid your reverence farewell, I must be on horse before cock-crow."

"What, in the dark!—how knowest thou which way to go?"

"I tracked the knight's horse-tread as far as near to the ford, as we rode along together," said Christie, "and I observed the track turn to the northward. He is for Edinburgh, I will warrant you—so soon as daylight comes I will be on the road again. It is a kenspeckle hoof-mark, for the shoe was made by old Eekie of Cannobie—I would swear to the curve of the cawker." So saying, he departed.

"Hateful necessity," said Father Eustace, looking after him, "that obliges us to use such implements as these! But, assailed as we are on all sides, and by all conditions of men, what alternative is left us!—But now let me to my most needful task."

The Abbot elect accordingly sat down to write letters, arrange orders, and take upon him the whole charge of an institution which tottered to its fall, with the same spirit of proud and devoted fortitude wherewith the commander of a fortress, reduced nearly to the last extremity, calculates what means remain to him to protract the fatal hour of successful storm. In the meanwhile Abbot Boniface, having given a few natural sighs to the downfall of the pre-eminence he had so long enjoyed amongst his brethren, fell fast asleep, leaving the whole cares and toils of office to his assistant and successor.

CHAPTER XXXV.

And when he came to broken triggs.
He slak'd his bow and swags;
And when he came to grass growing,
Set down his foot and ran.

Gil Morrice.

WE return to Halbert Glendinning, who, as our readers may remember, took the high-road to Edinburgh. His intercourse with the preacher Henry Warden, from whom he received a letter at the moment of his deliverance, had been so brief, that he had not even learned the name of the nobleman to whose care he was recommended. Something like a name had been spoken indeed, but he had only comprehended that he was to meet the chief advancing towards the south, at the head of a party of horse. When day dawned on his journey, he was in the same uncertainty. A better scholar would have been informed by the address of the letter, but Halbert had not so far profited by Father Eustace's lessons as to be able to decipher it. His mother-wit taught him that he must not, in such uncertain times, be too hasty in asking information of any one; and when, after a long day's journey, night surprised him near a little village, he began to be dubious and anxious concerning the issue of his journey.

In a poor country, hospitality is generally exercised freely, and Halbert, when he requested a night's quarters, did nothing either degrading or extraordinary. The old woman, to whom he made this request, granted it the more readily, that she thought she saw some resemblance between Halbert and her son Saunders, who had been killed in one of the frays so common in the time. It is true, Saunders was a short square-made fellow, with red hair and a freckled face, and somewhat bandy-legged, whereas the stranger was of a brown complexion, tall, and remarkably well-made. Nevertheless, the widow was clear that there existed a general resemblance betwixt her guest and Saunders, and kindly pressed him to share of her evening cheer. A pedlar, a man of about forty years old, was also her guest, who talked with great feeling of the misery of pursuing such a profession as his in the time of war and tumult.

"We think much of knights and soldiers," said he; "but the peddler-coffe who travels the laud has need of more courage than them all. I am sure he mair face mair risk, God help him. Here have I come this length, trusting the godly Earl of Murray would be on his march to the Borders, for he was to have guestened with the Baron of Avenel; and instead of that comes news that he has gone west-landways about some tulle in Ayrshire. And what to do I wot not; for if I go to the south without a safeguard, the next bonny rider I meet might ease me of sack and pack, and maybe of my life to boot; and then, if I try to strike across the moors, I may be as ill off before I can join myself to that good Lord's company."

No one was quicker at catching a hint than Halbert Glendinning. He said he himself had a desire to go westward. The pedlar looked at him with a very doubtful air, when the old dame, who perhaps thought her young guest resembled the tranquil Saunders, not only in his looks, but in a certain sweet turn to slight-of-hand, which the defunct was

supposed to have possessed, tipped him the wink, and assured the pedlar he need have no doubt that her young cousin was a true man.

"Cousin!" said the pedlar, "I thought you said this youth had been a stranger."

"Ill hearing makes ill rehearsing," said the landlady; "he is a stranger to me by eye-sight, but that does not make him a stranger to me by blood, more especially seeing his likeness to my son Saunders, poor bairn."

The pedlar's scruples and jealousies being thus removed, or at least silenced, the travellers agreed that they would proceed in company together the next morning by daybreak, the pedlar acting as a guide to Glendinning, and the youth as a guard to the pedlar, until they should fall in with Murray's detachment of horse. It would appear that the landlady never doubted what was to be the event of this compact, for, taking Glendinning aside, she charged him, "to be moderate with the puir body, but at all events, not to forget to take a piece of black say, to make the auld wife a new rokelay." Halbert laughed and took his leave.

It did not a little appal the pedlar, when, in the midst of a black heath, the young man told him the nature of the commission with which their hostess had charged him. He took heart, however, upon seeing the open, frank, and friendly demeanour of the youth, and vented his exclamations on the ungrateful old traitress. "I gave her," he said, "yester-e'en nae farther gane, a yard of that very black say, to make her a couvre-chef; but I see it is ill done to teach the cat the way to the kirk."

Thus set at ease on the intentions of his companion (for in those happy days the worst was always to be expected from a stranger,) the pedlar acted as Halbert's guide over moor and moor, over hill and many a dale, in such a direction as might best lead them towards the route of Murray's party. At length they arrived upon the side of an eminence, which commanded a distant prospect over a tract of savage and desolate moorland, marshy and waste—an alternate change of shingly hill and level moor, only varied by blue stagnant pools of water. A road scarcely marked winded like a serpent through the wilderness, and the pedlar, pointing to it, said—"The road from Edinburgh to Glasgow. Here we must wait, and if Murray and his train be not already passed by, we shall soon see trace of them, unless some new purpose shall have altered their resolution; for in these blessed days no man, were he the nearest the throne, as the Earl of Murray may be, knows when he lays his head on his pillow at night where it is to lie upon the following even."

They paused accordingly, and sat down, the pedlar cautiously using for a seat the box which contained his treasures, and not concealing from his companion that he wore under his cloak a fiolet hanging at his belt in case of need. He was courteous, however, and offered Halbert a share of the provisions, which he carried about him for refreshment. They were of the coarsest kind—oat-bread baked into cakes, oatmeal sliced with cold water, an onion or two, and a morsel of smoked ham completed the feast. But such as it was, no Scotsman of the time, had his rank been much higher than that of Glendinning, would have refused to share in it, especially as the pedlar produced, with a mysterious air, a turp's hurn, which he carried slung from his shoulders, and which, when

its contents were examined, produced to each party a clam-shell-full of excellent usquebagh—a liquor strange to Halbert, for the strong waters known in the south of Scotland came from France, and in fact such were but rarely used. The pedlar recommended it as excellent, said he had procured it in his last visit to the brues of Doune, where he had securely traded under the safe-conduct of the Laird of Buchanan. He also set an example to Halbert, by devoutly emptying the cup “to the speedy downfall of Anti-Christ.”

Their conviviality was scarce ended, ere a rising dust was seen on the road of which they commanded the prospect, and half a score of horsemen were dimly descried advancing at considerable speed, their escaques glancing, and the points of their spears twinkling as they caught a glimpse of the sun.

“These,” said the pedlar, “must be the out-scourers of Murray’s party; let us lie down in the peat-hag, and keep ourselves out of sight.”

“And why so?” said Halbert; “let us rather go down and make a signal to them.”

“God forbid!” replied the pedlar; “do you ken so ill the customs of our Scottish nation? That plump of spears that are spurring on so fast are doubtless commanded by some wild kinsman of Morton, or some such daring fear-nothing as neither regards God nor man. It is their business, if they meet with any enemies, to pick quarrels and clear the way of them; and the chief knows nothing of what happens, coming up with his more discreet and moderate friends, it may be a full mile in the rear. Were we to go near these lads of the laird’s belt, your letter would do you little good, and my pack would do me muckle black ill; they would tirl every stick of clathes from our back, fling us into a moss-hag with a stone at our heels, naked as the hour that brought us into this cumbered and sinful world, and neither Murray nor any other man over the wiser. But if he did come to ken of it, what might he help it?—it would be accounted a mere mistake, and there were all the noon made. O credit me, youth, that when men draw cold steel on each other in their native country, they neither can nor may dwell deeply on the offences of those whose swords are useful to them.”

They suffered, therefore, the vanguard, as it might be termed, of the Earl of Murray’s host to pass forward; and it was not long until a dense cloud of dust began to arise to the northward.

“Now,” said the pedlar, “let us hurry down the hill; for to tell the truth,” said he, dragging Halbert along earnestly, “a Scottish noble’s march is like a serpent—the head is furnished with fangs, and the tail hath its sting; the only harmless point of access is the main body.”

“I will hasten as fast as you,” said the youth; “but tell me why the rearward of such an army should be as dangerous as the van?”

“Because, as the vanguard consists of their picked wild desperates, resolute for mischief, such as neither fear God nor regard their fellow-creatures, but understand themselves bound to hurry from the road whatever is displeasing to themselves, so the rear-guard consists of misgoverned serving-men, who, being in charge of the baggage, take pains to amend by their exactions upon travelling-merchants and others, their own thefts on their master’s property. You will hear the ad-

vanced *enfans perdus*, as the French call them, and so they are indeed, namely, children of the fall, singing unclean and fulsome ballads of sin and harlotrie. And then will come on the middle-ward, when you will hear the canticles and psalms sung by the reforming nobles, and the gentry, and honest and pious clergy, by whom they are accompanied. And last of all, you will find in the rear a legend of godless lackeys, and palfreniers, and horse-boys, talking of nothing but dicing, drinking, and drabbing.”

As the pedlar spoke, they had reached the side of the high-road, and Murray’s main body was in sight, consisting of about three hundred horse, marching with great regularity, and in a closely compacted body. Some of the troopers wore the liveries of their masters, but this was not common. Most of them were dressed in such colours as chance dictated. But the majority, being clad in blue cloth, and the whole armed with cuirass and back-plate, with sleeves of mail, gauntlets and poldrons, and either mailed hose or strong jack-boots, they had something of a uniform appearance. Many of the leaders were clad in complete armour, and all in a certain half-military dress, which no man of quality in these disturbed times ever felt himself sufficiently safe to abandon.

The foremost of this party immediately rode up to the pedlar and to Halbert Glendinning, and demanded of them who they were. The pedlar told his story, the young Glendinning exhibited his letter, which a gentleman carried to Murray. In an instant after, the word “Halt!” was given through the squadron, and at once the onward heavy tramp, which seemed the most distinctive attribute of the body, ceased, and was heard no more. The command was announced that the troop should halt here for an hour to refresh themselves and their horses. The pedlar was assured of safe protection, and accommodated with the use of a baggage horse. But at the same time he was ordered into the rear; a command which he reluctantly obeyed, and not without wringing pathetically the hand of Halbert as he separated from him.

The young heir of Glendearg was in the meanwhile conducted to a plot of ground more raised, and therefore drier than the rest of the moor. Here a carpet was flung on the ground by way of table-cloth, and around it sat the leaders of the party, partaking of an entertainment as coarse, with relation to their rank, as that which Glendinning had so lately shared. Murray himself rose as he came forward, and advanced a step to meet him.

This celebrated person had in his appearance, as well as in his mind, much of the admirable qualities of James V., his father. Had not the stain of illegitimacy rested upon his birth, he would have filled the Scottish throne with as much honour as any of the Stewart race. But history, while she acknowledges his high talents, and such that was princely, nay, royal, in his conduct, cannot forget that ambition led him farther than honour or loyalty warranted. Brave amongst the bravest, fair in presence and in favour, skilful to manage the most intricate affairs, to attach to himself those who were doubtful, to subvert and overthrow, by the subtleties and treacheries of his enterprises, those who were resolute in resistance, he attained, and as to personal merit certainly deserved, the highest place in

the kingdom. But he abused, under the influence of strong temptation, the opportunities which his sister Mary's misfortunes and imprudence threw in his way; he supplanted his sovereign and benefactor in her power, and his history affords us one of those mixed characters, in which principle was so often sacrificed to policy, that we must condemn the statesman while we pity and regret the individual. Many events in his life give likelihood to the charge that he himself aimed at the crown; and it is too true, that he countenanced the fatal expedient of establishing an English, that is a foreign and a hostile interest, in the councils of Scotland. But his death may be received as an atonement for his offences, and may serve to shew how much more safe is the person of a real patriot, than that of the mere head of a faction, who is accounted answerable for the offences of his meanest attendants.

When Murray approached, the young rustic was naturally flustered at the dignity of his presence. The commanding form and the countenance to which high and important thoughts were familiar, the features which bore the resemblance of Scotland's long line of kings, were well calculated to impress awe and reverence. His dress had little to distinguish him from the high-born nobles and barons by whom he was attended. A buff-coat, richly embroidered with silken lace, supplied the place of armour; and a massive gold chain, with its medal, hung round his neck. His black velvet bonnet was decorated with a string of large and fair pearls, and with a small tufted feather; a long heavy sword was girt to his side, as the familiar companion of his hand. He wore gilded spurs on his boots, and these completed his equipment.

"This letter," he said, "is from the godly preacher of the word, Henry Wardie, young man? is it not so?" Halbert answered in the affirmative. "And he writes to us, it would seem, in some strait, and refers us to you for the circumstances. Let us know, I pray you, how things stand with him."

In some perturbation Halbert Glendinning gave an account of the circumstances which had accompanied the preacher's imprisonment. When he came to the discussion of the *handfasting* engagement, he "was struck with the ominous and displeased expression of Murray's brows, and, contrary to all prudential and politic rule, seeing something was wrong, yet not well aware what that something was, had almost stopped short in his narrative."

"What ails the fool!" said the Earl, drawing his dark-red eyebrows together, while the same dusky glew kindled on his brow—"Hast thou not learned to tell a true tale without stammering?"

"So please you," answered Halbert, with considerable address, "I have never before spoken in such a presence."

"He seems a modest youth," said Murray, turning to his next attendant, "and yet one who in a good cause will neither fear friend nor foe.—Speak on, friend, and speak freely."

Halbert then gave an account of the quarrel betwixt Julian Avenel and the preachers, which the Earl, biting his lip the while, compelled himself to listen to as a thing of indifference. At last he appeared open to take the part of the Barons.

"Hush! Warden," he said, "is too hot in his zeal. The law both of God and man maketh

allowance for certain alliances, though not strictly formal, and the issue of such may succeed."

This general declaration, he expressed, accompanying it with a glance around upon the few followers who were present at this interview. The rest of them answered—"There is no contravening that;" but one or two looked on the ground, and were silent. Murray then turned again to Glendinning, commanding him to say what next chanced, and not to omit any particular. When he mentioned the manner in which Julian had cast from him his concubine, Murray drew a deep breath, set his teeth hard, and laid his hand on the hilt of his dagger. Casting his eyes once more around the circle, which was now augmented by one or two of the reformed preachers, he seemed to devour his rage in silence, and again commanded Halbert to proceed. When he came to describe how Warden had been dragged to a dungeon, the Earl seemed to have found the point at which he might give vent to his own resentment, secure of the sympathy and approbation of all who were present. "Judge you," he said, looking to those around him, "judge you, my peers, and noble gentlemen of Scotland, betwixt me and this Julian Avenel—he hath broken his own word, and hath violated my safe-conduct—and judge you also, my reverend brethren, he hath put his hand forth upon a preacher of the gospel, and perchance may sell his blood to the worshippers of Anti-Christ!"

"Let him die the death of a traitor," said the secular chiefs, "and let his tongue be struck through with the hangman's fiery iron, to avenge his perjury!"

"Let him go down to his place with Basil's priests," said the preachers, "and be his ashes cast into Tophet!"

Murray heard them with the smile of expected revenge; yet it is probable that the brutal treatment of the female, whose circumstances somewhat resembled those of the Earl's own mother, had its share in the grim smile which curled his sun-burnt cheek and its haughty lip. To Halbert Glendinning, when his narrative was finished, he spoke with great kindness.

"He is a bold and gallant youth," said he to those around, "and formed of the stuff which becomes a bustling time. There are periods when men's spirits shine bravely through them. I will know something more of him."

He questioned him more particularly concerning the Baron of Avenel's probable force—the strength of his castle—the dispositions of his next heir, and this brought necessarily forward the full history of his brother's daughter, Mary Avenel, which was told with an embarrassment that did not escape Murray.

"Ha! Julian Avenel," he said, "and do you provoke my resentment, when you have so much more reason to deprecate my justice? I knew Walter Avenel, a true Scotsman and a good soldier. Our sister, the Queen, must right his daughter; and were her land respected, she would be a fitting bride to some brave man who may better merit our favour than the traitor Julian."—Then looking at Halbert, he said, "Art thou of gentle blood, young man?"

Halbert, with a faltering and uncertain voice, began to speak of his distant pretensions to claim a

descent from the ancient Glendownynes of Galloway, when Murray interrupted him with a smile.

"Nay—nay—leave pedigrees to hards and heralds. In our days, each man is the son of his own deeds. The glorious light of reformation hath shone alike on prince and peasant; and peasant, as well as prince may be illustrated by fighting in its defence. It is a stirring world, where all may advance themselves who have stout hearts and strong arms. Tell me frankly why thou hast left thy father's house."

Halbert Glendinning made a frank confession of his duel with Pierce Shafton, and mentioned his supposed death.

"By my hand," said Murray, "thou art a bold sparrow-hawk, to match thee so early with such a kite as Pierce Shafton. Queen Elizabeth would give her glove filled with gold crowns to know that meddling coxcomb to be under the sod.—Would she not, Morton?"

"Ay, by my word, and esteem her glove a better gift than the crowns," replied Morton, "which few Border lads like this fellow will esteem just valuation."

"But what shall we do with this young homicide?" said Murray; "what will our preachers say?"

"Tell them of Moses and of Benaiah," said Morton; "it is but the smiting of an Egyptian when all is said out."

"Let it be so," said Murray, laughing; "but we will bury the tale, as the prophet did the body, in the sand. I will take care of this swankie.—Be near to us, Glendinning, since that is thy name. We retain thee as a squire of our household. The master of our horse will see thee fully equipped and armed."

During the expedition which he was now engaged in, Murray found several opportunities of putting Glendinning's courage and presence of mind to the test, and he began to rise so rapidly in his esteem, that those who knew the Earl considered the youth's fortune as certain. One step only was wanting to raise him to a still higher degree of confidence and favour—it was the abjuration of the Popish religion. The ministers who attended upon Murray, and formed his chief support amongst the people, found an easy convert in Halbert Glendinning, who, from his earliest days, had never felt much devotion towards the Catholic faith, and who listened eagerly to more reasonable views of religion. By thus adopting the faith of his master, he rose higher in his favour, and was constantly about his person during his prolonged stay in the west of Scotland, which the intractability of those whom the Earl had to deal with, protracted from day to day, and week to week.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Faint din of battle heard
Distant down the hollow wind;
War and terror fled before,
Wounds and death were left behind.

UNKNOWN.

The autumn of the year was well advanced, when the Earl of Morton, one morning, rather unexpectedly, entered the antechamber of Murray, in which Halbert Glendinning was in waiting.

"Call your master, Halbert," said the Earl; "I have news for him from Teviotdale; and for you too, Glendinning.—News! news! my Lord of Murray!" he exclaimed at the door of the Earl's bedroom; "come forth instantly." The Earl appeared, and greeted his ally, demanding eagerly his tidings.

"I have had a sure friend with me from the south," said Morton; "he has been at Saint Mary's Monastery, and brings important tidings."

"Of what complexion?" said Murray, "and can you trust the bearer?"

"He is faithful, on my life," said Morton; "I wish all around your Lordship may prove equally so."

"At what, and whom, do you point?" demanded Murray.

"Here is the Egyptian of trusty Halbert Glendinning, our Southland Moses, come alive again, and flourishing, gay and bright as ever, in that Teviotdale Goshen, the Halldome of Kennaquhair."

"What mean you, my lord?" said Murray.

"Only that your new benchman has put a false tale upon you. Pierce Shafton is alive and well; by the same token that the gull is thought to be detained there by love to a miller's daughter, who roamed the country with him in disguise."

"Glendinning," said Murray, bending his brow into his darkest frown, "thou hast not, I trust dared to bring me a lie in thy mouth, in order to win my confidence?"

"My lord," said Halbert, "I am incapable of a lie. I should choke on one were my life to require that I pronounced it. I say, that this sword of my father was through the body—the point came out behind his back—the hilt pressed upon his breast-bone. And I will plunge it as deep in the body of any one who shall dare to charge me with falsehood."

"How, fellow!" said Morton, "wouldst thou beard a nobleman?"

"Be silent, Halbert," said Murray, "and you, my Lord of Morton, forbear him. I see truth written on his brow."

"I wish the inside of the manuscript may correspond with the superscription," replied his more suspicious ally. "Look to it, my lord, you will one day lose your life by too much confidence."

"And you will lose your friends by being too readily suspicious," answered Murray. "Enough of this—let me hear thy tidings."

"Sir John Foster," said Morton, "is about to send a party into Scotland to waste the Halldome."

"How! without waiting my presence and permission?" said Murray—"he is mad—will he come as an enemy into the Queen's country?"

"He has Elizabeth's express orders," answered Morton, "and they are not to be trifled with. Indeed, his march has been more than once projected and laid aside during the time we have been here, and has caused much alarm at Kennaquhair. Boniface, the old Abbot, has resigned, and whom think you they have chosen in his place?"

"No one surely," said Murray; "they would presume to hold no election until the Queen's pleasure and mine were known."

Morton shrugged his shoulders.—"They have chosen the pupil of old Cardinal Beaton, that wily determined champion of Rome, the brother of our busy Primate of Saint Andrews. Boniface, late the Sub-Prior of Kennaquhair, is now its Abbot,

and, like a second Pope Julius, is levying men and making musters to fight with Foster if he comes forward."

"We must prevent that meeting," said Murray, hastily; "whichever party wins the day, it were a fatal encounter for us—Who commands the troop of the Abbot?"

"Our faithful old friend, Julian Avenel, nothing less," answered Morton.

"Glendinning," said Murray, "sound trumpets to horse directly, and let all who love us get on horseback without delay—Yes, my lord, this were indeed a fatal dilemma. If we take part with our English friends, the country will cry shame on us—the very old wives will attack us with their rocks and spindles—the very stones of the street will rise up against us—we cannot set our face to such a deed of infamy. And my sister, whose confidence I already have such difficulty in preserving, will altogether withdraw it from me." Then, were we to oppose the English Warden, Elizabeth would call it a protecting of her enemies and what not, and we should lose her."

"The she-dragon," said Morton, "is the best card in our pack; and yet I would not willingly stand still and see Edgish blades carve Scots flesh—What say you to loitering by the way, marching far and easy for fear of spoiling our horses? They might then fight dog fight bull, fight Abbot fight archer, and no one could blame us for what chanced when we were not present."

"All would blame us, James Douglas," replied Murray; "we should lose both sides—we had better advance with the utmost celerity, and do what we can to keep the peace betwixt them.—I would the nag that brought Piercie Shafton hither had broken his neck over the highest heuch in Northumberland!—He is a proper, coxcomb to make all this bustle about, and to occasion perhaps a national war!"

"Had we known in time," said Douglas, "we might have had him privily waited upon as he entered the Borders; there are strapping lads enough would have rid us of him for the lucre of his spur-whang. But to the saddle, James Stewart, since the phrase goes. I hear your trumpets sound to horse and away—we shall soon see which nag is best breathed."

Followed by a train of about three hundred well-mounted men-at-arms, these two powerful barons directed their course to Dumfries, and from thence eastward to Teviotdale, marching at a rate which, as Morton had foretold, soon disabled a good many of their horses, so that when they approached the scene of expected action, there were not above two hundred of their train remaining in a body, and of these most were mounted on steeds which had been sorely jaded.

They had hitherto been amused and agitated by various reports concerning the advance of the English soldiers, and the degree of resistance which the Abbot was able to oppose to them. But when they were six or seven miles from Saint Mary's of Kennaquhair, a gentleman of the country, whom Murray had summoned to attend him, and on whose intelligence he knew he could rely, arrived at the head of two or three servants, "laddy with spur-ring, fiery red with haste." According to his re-

port, Sir John Foster, after several times announcing, and as often delaying, his intended incursion, had at last been so stung with the news that Piercie Shafton was openly residing within the Halidome, that he determined to execute the commands of his mistress, which directed him, at every risk, to make himself master of the Euphuist's person. The Abbot's unceasing exertions had collected a body of men almost equal in number to those of the English Warden, but less practised in arms. They were united under the command of Julian Avenel, and it was apprehended they would join battle upon the banks of a small stream which forms the verge of the Halidome.

"Who knows the place?" said Murray.

"I do, my lord," answered Glendinning.

"'Ris well," said the Earl; "take a score of the best-mounted horse—make what haste thou canst, and announce to them that I am coming up instantly with a strong power, and will cut to pieces, without mercy, whichever party strikes the first blow.—Davidson," said he to the gentleman who brought the intelligence, "thou shalt be my guide.—Hie thee on, Glendinning—Say to Foster, I conjure him, as he respects his mistress's service, that he will leave the matter in my hands. Say to the Abbot, I will burn the Monastery over his head, if he strikes a stroke till I come—Tell the dog, Julian Avenel, that he hath already one deep score to settle with me—I will set his head on the top of the highest pinnacle of Saint Mary's, if he presume to open another. Make haste, and spare not the spur for fear of spoiling horse-flesh."

"Your bidding shall be obeyed, my lord," said Glendinning; and choosing those whose horses were in best plight to be his attendants, he went off as fast as the jaded state of their cavalry permitted. Hill and hollow vanished from under the feet of the chargers.

They had not ridden half the way, when they met stragglers coming off from the field, whose appearance announced that the conflict was begun. Two supported in their arms a third, their elder brother, who was pierced with an arrow through the body. Halbert, who knew them to belong to the Halidome, called them by their names, and questioned them of the state of the affray; but just then, in spite of their efforts to retain him in the saddle, their brother dropped from the horse, and they dismounted in haste to receive his last breath. From men thus engaged, no information was to be obtained. Glendinning, therefore, pushed on with his little troop, the more anxiously as he perceived other stragglers, bearing Saint Andrew's cross upon their caps and corselets, flying apparently from the field of battle. Most of these, when they were aware of a body of horsemen approaching on the road, held to the one hand or the other; at such a distance as precluded coming to speech of them. Others, whose fear was more intense, kept the onward road, galloping wildly as fast as their horses could carry them, and when questioned, only glared without reply on those who spoke to them, and rode on without drawing bridle. Several of these were also known to Halbert, who had therefore no doubt from the circumstances in which he met them, that the men of the Halidome were defeated. He became now unspeakably anxious concerning the fate of his brother, who, he could not doubt, must have been engaged in the affray. He therefore increased the

speed of his horse, so that not above five or six of his followers could keep up with him. At length he reached a little hill, at the descent of which, surrounded by a semicircular sweep of a small stream, lay the plain which had been the scene of the skirmish.

It was a melancholy spectacle. War and terror, to use the expression of the poet, had rushed on to the field, and left only wounds and death behind them. The battle had been stoutly contested, as was almost always the case with these Border skirmishes, where ancient hatred, and mutual injuries, made men stubborn in maintaining the cause of their conflict. Towards the middle of the plain, there lay the bodies of several men who had fallen in the very act of grappling with the enemy; and there were seen countenances which still bore the stern expression of unextinguishable hate, and defiance, hands which clasp the hilt of the broken falchion, or strove in vain to pluck the deadly arrow from the wound. Some were wounded, and, cowed of the courage they had lately shewn, were begging aid, and craving water, in a tone of melancholy depression, while others tried to teach the faltering tongue to pronounce some half forgotten prayer, which, even when first learned, they had but half understood. Halbert, uncertain what course he was next to pursue, rode through the plain to see if, among the dead or wounded, he could discover any traces of his brother Edward. He experienced no interruption from the English. A distant cloud of dust announced that they were still pursuing the scattered fugitives, and he guessed, that to approach them with his followers, until they were again under some command, would be to throw away his own life, and that of his men, whom the victors would instantly confound with the Scots, against whom they had been successful. He resolved, therefore, to pause until Murray came up with his forces, to which he was the more readily moved, as he heard the trumpets of the English Warden sounding the retreat, and recalling from the pursuit. He drew his men together, and made a stand in an advantageous spot of ground, which had been occupied by the Scots in the beginning of the action, and most fiercely disputed while the skirmish lasted.

While he stood here, Halbert's ear was assailed by the feeble moan of a woman, which he had not expected to hear amid that scene, until the retreat of the foe had permitted the relations of the slain to approach, for the purpose of paying them the last duties. He looked with anxiety, and at length observed, that by the body of a knight in bright armour, whose crest, though soiled and broken, still shewed the marks of rank and birth, there sat a female, wrapt in a horseman's cloak, and holding something pressed against her bosom, which he soon discovered to be a child. He glanced towards the English. They advanced not, and the continued and prolonged sound of their trumpets, with the shouts of the leaders, announced that their powers would not be instantly re-assembled. He had, therefore, a moment to look after this unfortunate woman. He gave his horse to a spearman as he dismounted, and approaching the unhappy female, asked her, in the most soothing tone he could assume, whether he could assist her in her distress. The response made him no direct answer; but endeavouring, with a trembling and unskilful hand, to undo the springs of the visor and gorget, said in

a tone of impatient grief, "Oh, he would recover instantly could I but give him air—land and living, life and honour, would I give for the power of undoing these cruel iron platings that suffocate him!" He that would soothe sorrow must not argue on the vanity of the most deceitful hopes. The body lay as that of one whose last draught of vital air had been drawn, and who must nevermore have concern with the nether sky. But Halbert Glendinning failed not to raise the visor and cast loose the gorget, when, to his great surprise, he recognized the pale face of Julian Avenel. His last fight was over, the fierce and turbid spirit had departed in the strife in which it had so long delighted.

"Alas! he is gone," said Halbert, speaking to the young woman, in whom he had now no difficulty of knowing the unhappy Catherine.

"Oh, no, no, no!" she reiterated, "do not say so—he is not dead—he is but in a swoon. I have lain as long in one myself—and then his voice would rouse me, when he spoke kindly, and said, Catherine, look up for my sake—And look up, Julian, for mine!" she said, addressing the senseless corpse; "I know you do but counterfeit to frighten me, but I am not frightened," she added, with an hysterical attempt to laugh; and then instantly changing her tone, entreated him to "speak, were it but to curse my folly. Oh, the rudest word you ever said to me would now sound like the dearest you wasted on me before I gave you all. Lift him up," she said, "lift him up, for God's sake!—have you no compassion? He promised to wed me if I bore him a boy, and this child is so like to its father!—How shall he keep his word, if you do not help me to awaken him!—Christie of the Clinthill, Rowley, Hutcheon! ye were constant at his feat, but ye fled from him at the fray, false villains as ye are!"

"Not I, by Heaven!" said a dying man, who made some shift to raise himself on his elbow, and discovered to Halbert the well known features of Christie. "I fled not a foot, and a man can but fight while his breath lasts—mine is going fast.—So, youngster," said he, looking at Glendinning, and seeing his military dress, "thou hast ta'en the basinet at last! it is a better cap to live in than die in. I would chance had sent thy brother here instead—there was good in him—but thou art as wild, and wilt soon be as wicked as myself."

"God forbid!" said Halbert, hastily.

"Marry, and amen," with all my heart," said the wounded man, "there will be company enow without thee where I am going. But God be praised I had no hand in that wickedness," said he, looking to poor Catherine; and with some exclamation in his mouth, that sounded betwixt a prayer and a curse, the soul of Christie of the Clinthill took wing to the last account.

Deeply wrapt in the painful interest which these shocking events had excited, Glendinning forgot for a moment his own situation and duties, and was first recalled to them by a trampling of horse, and the cry of Saint George for England, which the English soldiers still continued to use. His handful of men, for most of the strangers had waited for Murray's coming up, remained on horseback, holding their lances upright, having no command either to submit or resist.

"There stands our Captain," said one of them,

as a strong party of English came up, the vanguard of Foster's troop.

"Your Captain! with his sword sheathed, and on foot in the presence of his enemy! a raw soldier. I warrant him," said the English leader. "So! he! young man, is your dream out, and will you now answer me if you will fight or fly?"

"Neither," answered Halbert Glendinning, with great tranquillity.

"Then throw down thy sword and yield thee," answered the Englishman.

"Not till I can help myself no otherwise," said Halbert, with the same moderation of tone and manner.

"Art thou for thine own hand, friend, or to whom dost thou owe service?" demanded the English Captain.

"To the noble Earl of Murray."

"Then thou servest," said the Southron, "the most disloyal nobleman who breathes—false both to England and Scotland."

"Thou liest!" said Glendinning, regardless of all consequences.

"Ha! art thou so hot now, and avert so cold but a minute since! I lie, do I! Wilt thou do battle with me on that quarrel?"

"With one to one—one to two—or two to five, as you list," said Halbert Glendinning; "grant me but a fair field."

"That thou shalt have.—Stand back, my mates," said the brave Englishman. "If I fall, give him fair play, and let him go off free with his people."

"Long life to the noble Captain!" cried the soldiers, as impatient to see the duel as if it had been a bull-baiting.

"He will have a short life of it, though," said the sergeant, "if he, an old man of sixty, is to fight for any reason, or for no reason, with every man he meets, and especially the young fellows he might be father to.—And here comes the Warden besides, to see the sword-play."

In fact, Sir John Foster came up with a considerable body of his horsemen, just as his Captain, whose age rendered him unequal to the combat with so strong and active a youth as Glendinning, was deprived of his sword.

"Take it up for shame, old Stawarth Bolton," said the English Warden; "and thou, young man, tell me who and what thou art!"

"A follower of the Earl of Murray, who bore his will to your honour," answered Glendinning—"but here he comes to say to himself, I see, the van of his horsemen come over the hills."

"Get into order, my masters," said Sir John Foster to his followers; "you that have broken your spears, draw your swords. We are something unprovided for a second field, but if yonder dark cloud on the hill edge bring us foul weather, we must bear as bravely as our broken cloaks will bide it. Meanwhile, Stawarth, we have got the deer we have hunted for—here is Pierce Shafton hard and fast betwixt two troopers."

"Who, that lad?" said Bolton; "he is no more Pierce Shafton than I am. He hath his gay cloak indeed—but Pierce Shafton is a round dozen of years older than that slip of roquary. I have known him since he was thus high. Did you never see him in the tilt-yard or in the presence?"

"To the devil with such vanities!" said Sir John Foster; "when had I leisure for them or any thing

else! During my whole life has she kept me to this hangman's office, chasing thieves one day and traitors another, in daily fear of my life; the lance never hung up in the hall, the foot never out of the stirrup, the saddles never off my nags' backs; and now, because I have been mistaken in the person of a man I never saw, I warrant me, the next letters from the Privy Council will rate me as I were a dog—a man were better dead than thus slaved and harassed."

A trumpet interrupted Foster's complaints, and a Scottish pursuivant who attended, declared "that the noble Earl of Murray desired, in all honour and safety, a personal conference with Sir John Foster, midway between their parties, with six of company in each, and ten free minutes to come and go."

"And now," said the Englishman, "comes another plague. I must go speak with yonder false Scot, and he knows how to frame his devices, to cast dust in the eyes of a plain man, as well as ever a knave in the north. I am no match for him in words, and for hard blows we are but too ill provided.—Pursuivant, we grant the conference—and you, Sir Swordsman," (speaking to young Glendinning), "draw off with your troopers to your own party—march—attend your Earl's trumpet.—Stawarth Bolton, put our troop in order, and be ready to move forward at the wagging of a finger.—Get you gone to your own friends, I tell you, Sir Squire, and loiter not here."

Notwithstanding this peremptory order, Halbert Glendinning could not help stopping to cast a look upon the unfortunate Catherine, who lay insensible of the danger and of the trampling of so many horses around her, insensible, as the second glance assured him, of all and for ever. Glendinning almost rejoiced when he saw that the last misery of life was over, and that the hoofs of the war-horses, amongst which he was compelled to leave her, could only injure and deface a senseless corpse. He caught the infant from her arms, half ashamed of the shout of laughter which rose on all sides, at seeing an armed man in such a situation assume such an unwonted and inconvenient burden.

"Shouldst thou infant!" cried a harquebusier.

"Port your infant!" said a pikeman.

"Peace, ye brutes," said Stawarth Bolton, "and respect humanity in others, if you have none yourselves. I pardon the lad having done some discredit to my gray hairs, when I see him take care of that helpless creature, which ye would have trampled upon as if ye had been littered of bitch-wolves, not born of women."

While this passed, the leaders on either side met in the neutral space betwixt the forces of either, and the Earl accosted the English Warden: "Is this fair or honest usage, Sir John, or for whom do you hold the Earl of Morton and myself, that you ride in Scotland with arrayed banner, fight, slay, and make prisoners at your own pleasure! Is it well done, think you, to spoil our land and shed our blood, after the many proofs we have given to your mistress of our devotion due to her will, saving always the allegiance due to our own sovereign?"

"My Lord of Murray," answered Foster, "all the world knows you to be a man of quick ingine and deep wisdom, and these several weeks have you held me in hand with promising to arrest my sovereign's mistress's rebel, this Pierce Shafton of Wil-

verton, and you have never kept your word, alleging turmoils in the west, and I wot not what other causes of hinderance. Now, since he has had the insolence to return hither, and live openly with ten miles of England, I could no longer, in plain duty to my mistress and queen, tarry upon yot successive delays, and therefore I have used her force to take her rebel, by the strong hand, wherever I can find him."

"And is Piercie Shafton in your hands, then?" said the Earl of Murray. "Be aware that I may not, without my own great shame, suffer you to remove him hence without doing battle."

"Will you, Lord Earl, after all the advantages you have received at the hands of the Queen of England, do battle in the cause of her rebel?" said Sir John Foster.

"Not so, Sir John," answered the Earl, "but I will fight to the death in defence of the liberties of our free Kingdom of Scotland."

"By my faith," said Sir John Foster, "I am well content—my sword is not blunted with all it has done yet this day."

"By my honour, Sir John," said Sir George Heron of Chipchase, "there is but little reason we should fight these Scottish Lords e'en now, for I hold opinion with old Stawarth Bolton, and believe yonder prisoner to be no more Piercie Shafton than he is the Earl of Northumberland; and you were but ill advised to break the peace betwixt the countries for a prisoner of less consequence than that gay mischief-maker."

"Sir George," replied Foster, "I have often heard you herons are afraid of hawks—Nay, lay not hand on sword, man—I did but jest; and for this prisoner, let him be brought up hither, that we may see who or what he is—always under assurance, my Lords," he continued, addressing the Scots.

"Upon our word and honour," said Morton, "we will offer no violence."

The laugh turned against Sir John Foster considerably, when the prisoner, being brought up, proved not only a different person from Sir Piercie Shafton, but a female in man's attire.

"Pluck the mantle from the queen's face, and cast her to the horse-boys," said Foster; "she has kept such company ere now, I warrant."

Even Murray was moved to laughter, no common thing with him, at the disappointment of the English Warden; but he would not permit any violence to be offered to the fair Molivara, who had thus a second time rescued Sir Piercie Shafton at her own personal risk.

"You have already done more mischief than you can well answer," said the Earl to the English Warden, "and it were dishonour to me should I permit you to hazzard a hair of this young woman's head."

"My lord," said Morton, "if Sir John will ride apart with me but for one moment, I will shew him such reasons as shall make him content to depart, and to refer this unhappy day's work to the judgment of the Commissioners nominated to try offences on the Border."

He then led Sir John Foster aside, and spoke to him in this manner:—"Sir John Foster, I much marvel that a man who knows your Queen Elizabeth as you do, should not know that, if you hope any thing from her, it must be for doing her useful

service, not for involving her in quarrels with her neighbours without any advantage. Sir Knight, I will speak frankly, what I know to be true. Had you seized the true Piercie Shafton by this ill-advised inroad; and had your deed threatened, as most likely it might, a breach betwixt the countries, your politic princess and her politic council would rather have disgraced Sir John Foster than entered into war in his behalf. But now that you have stricken short of your aim, you may rely on it you will have little thanks for carrying the matter farther. I will work thus far on the Earl of Murray, that he will undertake to dismiss Sir Piercie Shafton from the realm of Scotland.—Be well advised, and let the matter now pass off—you will gain nothing by farther violence, for if we fight, you as the fewer and the weaker through your former action, will needs have the worse."

Sir John Foster listened with his head declining on his breast-plate.

"It is a cursed chance," he said, "and I shall have little thanks for my day's work."

He then rode up to Murray, and said, that, in deference to his Lordship's presence and that of my Lord of Morton, he had come to the resolution of withdrawing himself, with his power, without farther proceedings.

"Stop there, Sir John Foster," said Murray, "I cannot permit you to retire in safety, unless you leave some one who may be surety to Scotland, that the injuries you have at present done us may be fully accounted for—you will reflect, that by permitting your retreat, I become accountable to my Sovereign, who will demand a reckoning of me for the blood of her subjects, if I suffer those who shed it to depart so easily."

"It shall never be told in England," said the Warden, "that John Foster gave pledges like a subdued man, and that on the very field on which he stands victorious.—But," he added, after a moment's pause, "if Stawarth Bolton wills to abide with you on his own free choice, I will say nothing against it; and, as I bethink me, it were better he should stay to see the dismissal of this same Piercie Shafton."

"I receive him as your hostage, nevertheless, and shall treat him as such," said the Earl of Murray. But Foster, turning away as if to give directions to Bolton and his men, affected not to hear this observation.

"There rides a faithful servant of his most beautiful and Sovereign Lady," said Murray aside to Morton. "Happy man! he knows not whether the execution of her commands may not cost him his head; and yet he is most certain that to leave them unexecuted will bring disgrace and death without reprieve. Happy are they who are not only subjected to the caprices of Dame Fortune, but held bound to account and be responsible for them, and that to a sovereign as moody and fickle as her humorous ladyship herself!"

"We also have a female Sovereign, my lord," said Morton.

"We have so, Douglas," said the Earl, with a suppressed sigh; "but it remains to be seen how long a female hand can hold the reins of power in a realm so wild as ours. We will now go on to Saint Mary's, and see ourselves after the state of that House.—Glendinning, look to that woman, and protect her.—What the fiend, man, hast thou

got in thine arms!—an infant as I live!—where couldst thou find such a charge, at such a place and moment?"

Halbert Glendinning briefly told the story. The Earl rode forward to the place where the body of Julian Avenel lay, with his unhappy companion's arms wrapt around him, like the trunk of an uprooted oak borne down by the tempest with all its ivy garlands. Both were cold dead. Murray was touched in an unwonted degree, remembering, perhaps, his own birth. "What have they to answer for, Douglas," he said, "who thus abuse the sweetest gifts of affection?"

The Earl of Morton, unhappy in his marriage, was a libertine in his amours.

"You must ask that question of Henry Warden, my lord, or of John Knox—I am but a wild counsellor in women's matters."

"Forward to Saint Mary's," said the Earl; "pass the word on—Glendinning, give the infant to this same female cavalier, and let it be taken charge of. Let no dishonour be done to the dead bodies, and call on the country to bury or remove them.—Forward, I say, my masters!"

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Gone to be married?—Gone to swear a pence!

King John.

THE news of the lost battle, so quickly carried by the fugitives to the village and convent, had spread the greatest alarm among the inhabitants. The Sacristan and other monks counselled flight; the Treasurer recommended that the church plate should be offered as a tribute to bribe the English officer; the Abbot alone was unmoved and undaunted.

"My brethren," he said, "since God has not given our people victory in the combat, it must be because he requires of us, his spiritual soldiers, to fight the good fight of martyrdom, a conflict in which nothing but our own faint-hearted cowardice can make us fail of victory. Let us assume then, the armour of faith, and prepare, if it be necessary, to die under the ruin of these shrines, to the service of which we have devoted ourselves. Highly honoured are we all in this distinguished summons, from our dear brother Nicholas, whose gray hairs have been preserved until they should be surrounded by the crown of martyrdom, down to my beloved son Edward, who, arriving at the vineyard at the latest hour of the day, is yet permitted to share its toils with those who have laboured from the morning. Be of good courage, my children. I dare not, like my sainted predecessors, promise to you that you shall be preserved by miracle—I and you are alike unworthy of that especial interposition, which in earlier times, turned the sword of sacrifice against the bosom of tyrants by whom it was wielded, daunted the hardened hearts of heretics with prodigies, and called down hosts of angels to defend the shrine of God and of the Virgin. Yet, by heavenly aid, you shall this day see that your Father and Abbot will not disgrace the shrine which sits upon his brow. Go to your cells, my children, and exercise your private devotions. Array yourselves also in alb and cope, as

for our most solemn festivals, and be ready, when the tolling of the largest bell announces the approach of the enemy, to march forth to meet them in solemn procession. Let the church be opened to afford such refuge as may be to those of our vassals, who, from their exertion in this day's unhappy battle, or other cause, are particularly apprehensive of the rage of the enemy. Tell Sir Pierce Shafton, if he has escaped the fight——"

"I am here, most venerable Abbot," replied Sir Pierce; "and if it so seemeth meet to you, I will presently assemble such of the men as have escaped this escaramouche, and will renew the resistance, even unto the death. Certes, you will learn from all, that I did my part in this unhappy matter. Had it pleased Julian Avenel to have attended to my counsel, specially in somewhat withdrawing of his main battle, even as you may have marked the heron eschew the stoop of the falcon, receiving him rather upon his beak than upon his wing, affairs, as I do conceive, might have had a different face, and we might then, in a more bolliose manner, have maintained that affray. Nevertheless, I would not be understood to speak any thing in disregard of Julian Avenel, whom I saw fall fighting manfully with his face to his enemy, which hath banished from my memory the unseemly term of 'meddling coxcomb,' with which it pleased him something rashly to qualify any advice, and for which, had it pleased Heaven and the saints to have prolonged the life of that excellent person, I had it bound upon my soul to have put him to death with my own hand."

"Sir Pierce," said the Abbot, at length interrupting him, "our time allows brief leisure to speak what might have been."

"You are right, most venerable Lord and Father," replied the incorrigible Euphuist; "the preterite, as grammarians have it, concerns frail mortality less than the future mood, and indeed our cogitations respect chiefly the present. In a word, I am willing to head all who will follow me, and offer such opposition as manhood and mortality may permit, to the advance of the English, though they be my own countrymen; and be assured, Pierce Shafton will measure his length, being five feet ten inches, on the ground as he stands, rather than give two yards in retreat, according to the usual motion in which we retrograde."

"I thank you, Sir Knight," said the Abbot, "and I doubt not that you would make your words good; but it is not the will of Heaven that carnal weapons should rescue us. We are called to endure, not to resist, and may not waste the blood of our innocent commons in vain—Fruitless opposition becomes not men of our profession; they have my commands to resign the sword and the spear.—God and Our Lady have not blessed our banner."

"Bethink you, reverend lord," said Pierce Shafton, very eagerly, "ere you resign the defence that is in your power—there are many posts near the entry of this village, where brave men might live or die to the advantage; and I have this additional motive to make defence,—the safety, namely, of a fair friend, who, I hope, hath escaped the hands of the heretics."

"I understand you, Sir Pierce," said the Abbot—"you mean the daughter of our Convent's miller?"

"Reverend my lord," said Sir Pierce, not with-

out hesitation, "the fair Mysinda is, as may be in some sort alleged, the daughter of one who mechanically prepareth corn to be manipulated into bread, without which we could not exist, and which is therefore an employment in itself honourable, nay, necessary. Nevertheless, if the purest sentiments of a generous mind, streaming forth like the rays of the sun reflected by a diamond, may ennoble one, who is in some sort the daughter of a molendinary mechanic——"

"I have no time for all this, Sir Knight," said the Abbot; "be it enough to answer, that with our will we war no longer with carnal weapons. We of the spirituality will teach you of the temporality how to die in cold blood, our hands not clenched for resistance, but folded for prayer—our minds not filled with jealous hatred, but with Christian meekness and forgiveness—our ears not deafened, nor our senses confused, by the sound of clamorous instruments of war; but, on the contrary, our voices composed to Halleluiah, Kyrie-Eleison, and Salve Regina, and our blood temperate and cold, as those who think upon reconciling themselves with God, not of avenging themselves of their fellow-mortals."

"Lord Abbot," said Sir Piercie, "there is nothing to the faith of my Molinara, whom, I beseech you to observe, I will not abandon, while golden hilt and steel blade bide together on my falcion. I commanded her not to follow us to the field, and yet methought I saw her in her page's attire amongst the rear of the combatants."

"You must seek elsewhere for the person in whose fate you are so deeply interested," said the Abbot; "and at present I will pray of your knight-hood to inquire concerning her at the church, in which all our more defenceless vassals have taken refuge. It is my advice to you; that you also abide by the horns of the altar; and, Sir Piercie Shafton," he added, "be of one thing secure, that if you come to harm, it will involve the whole of this brotherhood; for never, I trust, will the meanest of us buy safety at the expense of surrendering a friend or a guest. Leave us, my son, and may God be your aid!"

When Sir Piercie Shafton had departed, and the Abbot was about to betake himself to his own cell, he was surprised by an unknown person anxiously requiring a conference, who, being admitted, proved to be no other than Henry Warden. The Abbot started as he entered, and exclaimed angrily,—"Ha! are the few hours that fate allows him who may last wear the mitre of this house, not to be excused from the intrusion of heresy? Dost thou come," he said, "to enjoy the hopes which fate holds out to thy demented and accursed sect, to see the besom of destruction sweep away the pride of old religion—to deface our shrines—to mutilate and lay waste the bodies of our benefactors, as well as their sepulchres—to destroy the pinnacles and carved work of God's house, and our Lady's?"

"Peace, William Allan!" said the Protestant preacher, with dignified composure; "for none of these purposes do I come. I would have these stately shrines deprived of the idols which, no longer simply regarded as the effigies of the good and the wise, have become the objects of foul idolatry. I would otherwise have its ornaments subvert, unless as they are, or may be, a snare to the souls of men;

and especially do I condemn those ravages which have been made by the heady fury of the people, stung into zeal against wilt-worship by bloody persecution. Against such wanton devastations I lift my testimony."

"Idle distinguisher that thou art!" said the Abbot Eustace, interrupting him; "what signifies the pretext under which thou dost despoil the house of God! and why at this present emergence wilt thou insult the matter of it by thy ill-omened presence?"

"Thou art unjust, William Allan," said Warden; "but I am not the less settled in my resolution. Thou hast protected me some time since at the hazard of thy rank, and what I know thou holdest still dearer, at the risk of thy reputation with thine own sect. Our party is now uppermost, and, believe me, I have come down the valley, in which thou didst quarter me for sequestration's sake, simply with the wish to keep my engagements to thee."

"Ay," answered the Abbot, "and it may be, that my listening to that worldly and infirm compassion which pleaded with me for thy life, is now avenged by this impending judgment. Heaven hath smitten, it may be, the erring shepherd, and scattered the flock."

"Think better of the Divine judgments," said Warden. "Not for thy sins, which are those of thy blinded education and circumstances; not for thine own sins, William Allan, art thou stricken, but for the accumulated guilt which thy mis-named church hath accumulated on her head, and those of her votaries, by the errors and corruptions of ages."

"Now, by my sure belief in the Rock of Peter," said the Abbot, "thou dost rekindle the last spark of human indignation for which my bosom has fuel—I thought I might not again have felt the impulse of earthly passion, and it is thy voice which once more calls me to the expression of human anger! yea, it is thy voice that comest to insult me in my hour of sorrow, with these blasphemous accusations of that church which hath kept the light of Christianity alive from the times of the Apostles till now."

"From the times of the Apostles!" said the preacher, eagerly. "*Negatur, Gulielme Allan*—the primitive church differed as much from that of Rome, as did light from darkness, which, did time permit, I should speedily prove. And worse dost thou judge, in saying, I come to insult thee in thy hour of affliction, being here, God wot, with the Christian wish of fulfilling an engagement I had made to my host, and of rendering myself to thy will while it had yet power to exercise aught upon me, and if it might so be, to mitigate in thy behalf the rage of the victors whom God hath sent as a scourge to thy obstinacy."

"I will none of thy intercession," said the Abbot, sternly; "the dignity to which the church has exalted me, never allowed have availed my bosom more proudly in the time of the highest prosperity, than it doth at this crisis—I ask nothing of thee, but the assurance that my loyalty to thee hath been the means of perverting to good to Satan, that I have not given to the wolf any of the stray lambs whom the Great Shepherd of souls had intrusted to my charge."

"William Allan," answered the Protestant, "I

will be sincere with thee. What I promised I have kept—I have withheld my voice from speaking even good things. But it has pleased Heaven to call the maiden Mary Avenel to a better sense of faith than thou and all the disciples of Rome can teach. Her I have aided with my humble power—I have extricated her from the machinations of evil spirits, to which she and her house were exposed during the blindness of their Romish superstition, and, praise be to my Master, I have not reason to fear she will again be caught in thy snares."

"Wretched man!" said the Abbot, unable to suppress his rising indignation, "is it to the Abbot of Saint Mary's that you boast having misled the soul of a dweller in Our Lady's Hallidome into the paths of foul error and damning heresy!—Thou dost urge me, Wellwood, beyond what it becomes me to bear, and movest me to employ the few moments of power I may yet possess, in removing from the face of the earth one, whose qualities given by God, have been so utterly perverted as thine to the service of Satan."

"Do thy pleasure," said the preacher; "thy vain wrath shall not prevent thy doing my duty & advantage thee, where it may be done without neglecting my higher call. I go to the Earl of Murray."

Their conference, which was advancing fast into bitter disputation, was here interrupted by the deep and sullen toll of the largest and heaviest bell of the Convent, a sound famous in the chronicles of the Community, for dispelling of tempests, and pitting to fight demons, but which now only announced danger, without affording any means of warding against it. Hastily repeating his orders, that all the brethren should attend in the choir, arrayed for solemn procession, the Abbot ascended to the battlements of the lofty Monastery, by his own private staircase, and there met the Sacristan, who had been in the act of directing the tolling of the huge bell, which fell under his charge.

"It is the last time I shall discharge mine office, most venerable Father and Lord," said he to the Abbot, "for yonder come the Philistines; but I would not that the large bell of Saint Mary's should sound for the last time, otherwise than in true and full tone—I have been a sinful man for one of our holy profession," added he, looking upward, "yet may I presume to say, not a bell hath sounded out of tune from the tower of the house, while Father Philip had the superintendence of the chime and the belfry."

The Abbot, without reply, cast his eyes towards the path, which, winding around the mountain, descends upon Kennagahair, from the south-east. He beheld at a distance a cloud of dust, and heard the neighing of many horses, while the occasional sparkle of the long line of spears, as they came downwards into the valley, announced that the band came thither in arms.

"Shame of my weakness!" said Abbot Eustace, dabbling the tears from his eyes; "my sight is too much dimmed to observe their motions—look, my son Edward," for his favourite novice had again joined him, "and tell me what ensigns they bear."

"They are Scottish men, when all is done," exclaimed Edward—"I see the white crosses—it may be the Western Borderers, or Ferniehirst and his clan."

"Look at the banner," said the Abbot; "tell me what are the blazonries?"

"The arms of Scotland," said Edward, "the lion and its treasure, quartered, as I think, with three cushions—Can it be the royal standard?"

"Alas! no," said the Abbot, "it is that of the Earl of Murray. He hath assumed with his new conquest the badge of the valiant Randolph, and hath dropt from his hereditary coat the bend which indicates his own base birth—would to God he may not have blotted it also from his memory, and aim as well at possessing the name, as the power, of a king."

"At least, my father," said Edward, "he will secure us from the violence of the Southron."

"Ay, my son, as the shepherd secures a silly lamb from the wolf, which he destines in due time to his own banquet. Oh my son, evil days are on us! A breach has been made in the walls of our sanctuary—thy brother hath fallen from the faith. Such news brought my last secret intelligence—Murray has already spoken of rewarding his services with the hand of Mary Avenel."

"Of Mary Avenel!" said the novice tottering towards and grasping hold of one of the carved pinnacles which adorned the proud battlement.

"Ay, of Mary Avenel, my son, who has also abjured the faith of her fathers. Weep not, my Edward, weep not, my beloved son! or weep for their apostasy, and not for their union—Bless God, who hath called thee to himself, out of the tents of wickedness; but for the grace of Our Lady and Saint Benedict, thou also hadst been a castaway."

"I endeavour, my father," said Edward, "I endeavour to forget; but what I would now blot from my memory has been the thought of all my former life—Murray dare not forward a match so unequal in birth."

"He dares do what suits his purpose—The Castle of Avenel is strong, and needs a good castellan, devoted to his service; as for the difference of their birth, he will mind it no more than he would mind defacing the natural regularity of the ground, were it necessary he should erect upon it military lines and intrenchments. But do not droop for that—awaken thy soul within thee, my son. Think you part with a vain vision, an idle dream, nursed in solitude and inaction.—I weep not, yet what am I now like to lose!—Look at these towers, where saints dwelt, and where heroes have been buried—Think that I, so briefly called to preside over the pious flock, which has dwelt here since the first light of Christianity, may be this day written down the last father of this holy community—Come, let us descend, and meet our fate. I see them approach near to the village."

The Abbot descended, the novice cast a glance around him; yet the sense of the danger impending over the stately structure, with which he was now united, was unable to banish the recollection of Mary Avenel.—"His brother's bride!" he pulled the cowl over his face, and followed his Superior.

The whole bells of the Abbey now added their peal to the death-toll of the largest which had so long sounded. The monks wept and prayed as they got themselves into the order of their procession for the last time, as seemed but too probable.

"It is well our Father Boniface hath retired to the inland," said Father Philip; "he could never

have put over this day—it would have broken his heart!"

"God be with the soul of Abbot Ingelram!" said old Father Nicholas, "there were no such doings in his days.—They say we are to be put forth of the cloisters; and how I am to live any where else than where I have lived for these seventy years, I wot not—the best is, that I have not long to live any where."

A few moments after this the great gate of the Abbey was flung open, and the procession moved slowly forward from beneath its huge and richly adorned gateway. Cross and banner, pix and chalice, alarines containing relics, and censers steaming with incense, preceded and were intermingled with the long and solemn array of the brotherhood, in their long black gowns and cowls, with their white scapularies hanging over them; the various officers of the convent each displaying his proper badge of office. In the centre of the procession came the Abbot, surrounded and supported by his chief assistants. He was dressed in his habit of high solemnity, and appeared as much unconcerned as if he had been taking his usual part in some ordinary ceremony. After him came the inferior persons of the convent; the novices in their silks or white dresses, and the lay brethren distinguished by their beards, which were seldom worn by the Fathers. Women and children, mixed with a few men, came in the rear, bewailing the apprehended desolation of their ancient sanctuary. They moved, however, in order, and restrained the marks of their sorrow to a low wailing sound, which rather mingled with than interrupted the measured chant of the monks.

In this order the procession entered the market-place of the village of Kennaquhair, which was then, as now, distinguished by an ancient cross of curious workmanship, the gift of some former monarch of Scotland. Close by the cross, of much greater antiquity, and scarcely less honoured, was an immensely large oak-tree, which perhaps had witnessed the worship of the Druids, ere the stately Monastery to which it adjoined had raised its spires in honour of the Christian faith. Like the Bentang-tree of the African villages, or the Plaitow-oak mentioned in White's Natural History of Selborne, this tree was the rendezvous of the villagers, and regarded with peculiar veneration; a feeling common to most nations, and which perhaps may be traced up to the remote period when the patriarch feasted the angels under the oak at Mamre.¹

The monks formed themselves each in their due place around the cross, while under the ruins of the aged tree crowded the old and the feeble, with others who felt the common alarm. When they had thus arranged themselves, there was a deep and solemn pause. The monks stilled their chant, the lay populace hushed their lamentations, and all awaited in terror and silence the arrival of those heretical forces, whom they had been so long taught to regard with fear and trembling.

A distant trampling was at length heard, and the glance of spears was seen to shine through the trees above the village. The sounds increased, and became more thick, one close continuous rushing sound, in which the tread of hoofs was mingled

with the ringing of armour. The horsemen soon appeared at the principal entrance which leads into the irregular square or market-place which forms the centre of the village. They entered two by two, slowly, and in the greatest order. The van continued to move on, riding round the open space, until they had attained the utmost point, and then turning their horses' heads to the street, stood fast; their companions followed in the same order, until the whole market-place was closely surrounded with soldiers; and the files who followed, making the same manœuvre, formed an inner line within those who had first arrived, until the place was begirt with a quadruple file of horsemen closely drawn up. There was now a pause, of which the Abbot availed himself, by commanding the brotherhood to raise the solemn chant *De profundis clamavi*. He looked around the armed ranks, to see what impression the solemn sounds made on them. All were silent, but the brows of some had an expression of contempt, and almost all the rest bore a look of indifference; their course had been too long decided to permit past feelings of enthusiasm to be anew awakened by a procession or by a hymn.

"Their hearts are hardened," said the Abbot to himself, "in dejection, but not in despair; it remains to see whether those of their leaders are equally obdurate."

The leaders, in the meanwhile, were advancing slowly, and Murray, with Morton, rode in deep conversation before a chosen band of their most distinguished followers, amongst whom came Halbert Glendinning. But the preacher Henry Warden, who, upon leaving the Monastery, had instantly joined them, was the only person admitted to their conference.

"You are determined, then," said Morton to Murray, "to give the heiress of Avenel, with all her pretensions, to this nameless and obscure young man?"

"Hath not Warden told you," said Murray, "that they have been bred together, and are lovers from their youth upward?"

"And that they are both," said Warden, "by means which may be almost termed miraculous, rescued from the delusions of Rome, and brought within the pale of the true church. My residence at Glendearg hath made me well acquainted with these things. Ill would it become my habit and my calling, to thrust myself into match-making and giving in marriage, but worse were it in me to see your lordships do needless wrong to the feelings which are proper to our nature, and which, being indulged honestly and under the restraints of religion, become a pledge of domestic quiet here, and future happiness in a better world. I say, that you will do ill to rend those ties asunder, and to give this maiden to the kinsman of Lord Morton, though Lord Morton's kinsman he be."

"These are fair reasons, my Lord of Murray," said Morton, "why you should refuse me so simple a boon as to bestow this gilly damed upon young Bennygaak. Speak out plainly, my lord; say you would rather see the Castle of Avenel in the hands of one who owes his name and existence solely to your favour, than in the power of a Douglas, and of my kinsman."

"My Lord of Morton," said Murray, "I have done nothing in this matter which should aggrrieve you. This young man Glendinning has done me

¹ It is scarcely necessary to say, that in Melrose, the prototype of Kennaquhair, no such oak ever existed.

good service, and may do me more. My promise was in some degree passed to him, and that while Julian Avenel was alive, what sought beside the maiden's lily hand would have been hard to come by; whereas you never thought of such an alliance for your kinsman, till you saw Julian lie dead yonder on the field, and knew his land to be a waif free to the first who could seize it. Come, come, my lord, you do less than justice to your gallant kinsman, in wishing him a bride bred up under the milk-pail; for this girl is a peasant wench in all but the accident of birth. I thought you had more deep respect for the honour of the Douglasses."

"The honour of the Douglasses is safe in my keeping," answered Morton, haughtily; "that of other ancient families may suffer as well as the name of Avenel, if rustics are to be matched with the blood of our ancient barons."

"This is but idle talking," answered Lord Murray; "in times like these we must look to men, and not to pedigrees. Hay was but a rustic before the battle of Loncarty—the bloody yoke actually dragged the plough ere it was blazoned on a crest by the herald. Times of action make princes into peasants, and bores into bagons. All families have sprung from one mean man; and it is well if they have never degenerated from his virtue who raised them first from obscurity."

"My Lord of Murray will please to except the house of Douglas," said Morton, haughtily; "men have seen it in the tree, but never in the sapling—have seen it in the stream, but never in the fountain! In the earliest of our Scottish annals, the Black Douglas was powerful and distinguished as now."

"I bend to the honours of the house of Douglas," said Murray, somewhat ironically; "I am conscious we of the Royal House have little right to compete with them in dignity—What though we have worn crowns and carried sceptres for a few generations, if our genealogy moves no farther back than to the humble *Alanus Dapifer*!"

Morton's cheek reddened as he was about to reply; but Henry Warden availed himself of the liberty which the Protestant clergy long possessed, and exerted it to interrupt a discussion, which was becoming too eager and personal to be friendly.

"My lords," he said, "I must be bold in discharging the duty of my Master. It is a shame and scandal to hear two nobles, whose hands have been so forward in the work of reformation, fall into discord about such vain follies as now occupy your thoughts. Bethink you how long you have thought with one mind, seen with one eye, heard with one ear, confirmed by your union the congregation of the Church, appalled by your joint authority the congregation of Anti-Christ; and will you now fall into discord, about an old decayed castle and a few barren hills, about the loves and likings of a humble spearman, and a damsel bred in the same obscurity, or about the still vainer questions of idle genealogy!"

"The goodman hath spoken right, noble Douglas," said Murray, reaching him his hand, "our union is too essential to the good cause to be broken off upon such idle terms of dissension. I am fixed to gratify Glendinning in this matter—my promise is passed. The war, in which I have had my share, has made

many a family miserable; I will at least try if I may not make one happy. There are maids and manors enow in Scotland.—I promise you, my noble ally, that young Bennygask shall be richly wived."

"My lord," said Warden, "you speak nobly, and like a Christian. Alas! this is a land of hatred and bloodshed—let us not chase from thence the few traces that remain of gentle and domestic love.—And be not too eager for wealth to thy noble kinsman, my Lord of Morton, seeing contentment in the marriage state no way depends on it."

"If you allude to my family misfortune," said Morton, whose Countess, wedded by him for her estate and honours, was insane in her mind, "the habit you wear, and the liberty, or rather license, of your profession, protect you from my resent ment."

"Alas! my lord," replied Warden, "how quick and sensitive is our self-love! When, pressing forward in our high calling, we point out the errors of the Sovereign, who praises our boldness more than the noble Morton! But touch we upon his own sore, which most needs lancing, and he shrinks from the faithful chirurgeon in fear and impatient anger!"

"Enough of this, good and reverend sir," said Murray; "you transgress the prudence yourself recommended even now.—We are now close upon the village, and the proud Abbot is come forth at the head of his hive. Thou hast pleaded well for him, Warden, otherwise I had taken this occasion to pull down the nest, and chase away the rooks."

"Nay, but do not so," said Warden; "this William Allan, whom they call the Abbot Eustatius, is a man whose misfortunes would more prejudice our cause than his prosperity. You cannot inflict more than he will endure; and the more that he is made to bear, the higher will be the influence of his talents and his courage. In his conventual throne, he will be but coldly looked on—disliked, it may be, and envied. But turn his crucifix of gold into a crucifix of wood—let him travel through the land, an oppressed and impoverished man, and his patience, his eloquence, and learning, will win more hearts from the good cause, than all the mitred abbots of Scotland have been able to make prey of during the last hundred years."

"Tush! tush! man," said Morton, "the revenues of the Halidome will bring more men, spears, and horses, into the field in one day, than his preaching in a whole lifetime. These are not the days of Peter the Hermit, when monks could march armies from England to Jerusalem; but gold and good deeds will still do as much or more than ever. Had Julian Avenel had but a score or two more men this morning, Sir John Foster had not missed a worse welcome. I say, confiscating the monk's revenues is drawing his fang-teeth."

"We will surely lay him under contribution," said Murray; "and, moreover, if he desires to remain in his Abbey, he will do well to produce Pierce Shafton."

As he thus spoke, they entered the market-place, distinguished by their complete armour and their lofty plumes, as well as by the number of followers bearing their colours and badges. Both these powerful nobles, but more especially Murray, so nearly allied to the crown, had at that time a retinue and household not much inferior to that of Scottish royalty. As they advanced into the market-place, a pursuivant, pressing forward from their train,

¹ See Note N. *Pedigree of the Douglas Family.*

² See Note O. *Pedigree of the Stewart Family.*

addressed the monks in these words:—"The Abbot of Saint Mary's is commanded to appear before the Earl of Murray."

"The Abbot of Saint Mary's," said Eustace, "is, in the patrimony of his Convent, superior to every temporal lord. Let the Earl of Murray, if he seeks him, come himself to his presence."

On receiving this answer, Murray smiled scornfully, and, dismounting from his lofty saddle, advanced, accompanied by Morton, and followed by others, to the body of monks assembled around the cross. There was an appearance of shrinking among them at the approach of the heretic lord, so dreaded and so powerful. But the Abbot, casting on them a glance of rebuke and encouragement, stepped forth from their ranks like a courageous leader, when he sees that his personal valour must be displayed to revive the drooping courage of his followers. "Lord James Stewart," he said, "or Earl of Murray, if that be thy title, I, Eustatius, Abbot of Saint Mary's, demand by what right you have filled our peaceful village, and surrounded our brethren, with these bands of armed men! If hospitality is sought, we have never refused it to courteous asking—if violence be meant against peaceful churchmen, let us know at once, the pretext and the object!"

"Sir Abbot," said Murray, "your language would better have become another age, and a presence inferior to ours. We come not here to reply to your interrogations, but to demand of you why you have broken the peace, collecting your vassals in arms, and convoking the Queen's lieges, whereby many men have been slain, and much trouble, perchance breach of amity with England, is likely to arise!"

"*Lupus in fabula*," answered the Abbot, scornfully. "The wolf accused the sheep of muddying the stream when he drank in it above her—but it served as a pretext for devouring her. Convocate the Queen's lieges! I did so to defend the Queen's land against foreigners. I did but my duty; and I regret I had not the means to do it more effectually."

"And was it also a part of your duty to receive and harbour the Queen of England's rebel and traitor; and to inflame a war betwixt England and Scotland?" said Murray.

"In my younger days, my lord," answered the Abbot, with the same intrepidity, "a war with England was no such dreaded matter; and not merely a mitred abbot, bound by his rule to shew hospitality and afford sanctuary to all, but the poorest Scottish peasant, would have been ashamed to have pleaded fear of England as the reason for shutting his door against a persecuted exile. But in those olden days, the English seldom saw the face of a Scottish nobleman, save through the bars of his visor."

"Monk!" said the Earl of Morton, sternly, "this insolence will little avail thee; the days are gone by when Rome's priests were permitted to brave noblemen with impunity. Give us up this Pierce Shafton, or by my father's crest I will set thy Abbey in a bright flame!"

"And if thou dost, Lord of Morton, its ruins will tumble above the tombs of thine own ancestors. Be the issue as God wills, the Abbot of Saint Mary's gives up no one whom he hath promised to protect."

"Abbot!" said Murray, "beshink thee ere we are driven to deal roughly—the hands of these

men," he said, pointing to the soldiers, "will make wild work among shrines and cells, if we are compelled to undertake a search for this Englishman."

"Ye shall not need," said a voice from the crowd; and, advancing gracefully before the Earls, the Euphuist flung from him the mantle in which he was muffled. "Vine the cloud that shadowed Shafton!" said he; "behold, my lords, the Knight of Wilverton, who spares you the guilt of violence and sacrilege."

"I protest before God and man against any infraction of the privileges of this house," said the Abbot, "by an attempt to impose violent hands upon the person of this noble knight. If there be yet spirit in a Scottish Parliament, we will make you hear of this elsewhere, my lords!"

"Spare your threats," said Murray; "it may be, my purpose with Sir Pierce Shafton is not such as thou dost suppose—Attach him, purgivant, as our prisoner, rescue or no rescue."

"I yield myself," said the Euphuist, "reserving my right to defy my Lord of Murray and my Lord of Morton to, single^d duel, even as one gentleman may demand satisfaction of another."

"You shall not want those who will answer your challenge, Sir Knight," replied Morton, "without aspiring to men above thine own degree."

"And where am I to find these superlative champions," said the English knight, "whose blood runs more pure than that of Pierce Shafton?"

"Here is a flight for you, my lord!" said Murray.

"As ever was flown by a wild-goose," said Stawarth Bolton, who had now approached to the front of the party.

"Who dared to say that word!" said the Euphuist, his face crimson with rage.

"Tut! man," said Bolton, "make the best of it, thy mother's father was but a tailor, old Overstitch, of Holdegness—Why, what! because thou art a misproud bird, and despisest thine own natural lineage, and stuffest in unpaid silks and velvets, and keepest company with gallants and cutters, must we lose our memory for that! Thy mother, Moll Overstitch, was the prettiest wench in those parts—she was wedded by wild Shafton of Wilverton, who, men say, was a-kin to the Pierce on the wrong side of the blanket."

"Help the knight to some strong waters," said Morton; "he hath fallen from such a height, that he is stunned with the tumble."

In fact, Sir Pierce Shafton looked like a man stricken by a thunderbolt, while, notwithstanding the seriousness of the scene hitherto, no one of those present, not even the Abbot himself, could refrain from laughing at the rueful and mortified expression of his face.

"Laugh on," he said at length, "laugh on, my masters, shrugging his shoulders; 'it is not for me to be offended—yet would I know full fair from that squire who is laughing with the loudest, how he had discovered this unhappy blot in an otherwise spotless lineage, and for what purpose he hath made it known!"

"I make it known!" said Halbert Glandinning, in astonishment,—for to him this pathetic appeal was made,— "I never heard the thing till this moment."

¹ See Note F. *The White-Sheet.*

"Why, did not that old rude soldier learn it from thee?" said the knight, in increasing amazement.

"Not I, by Heaven!" said Bolton; "I never saw the youth in my life before."

"But you have seen him ere now, my worthy master," said Dame Glendinning, bursting in her turn from the crowd. "My son, this is Stawarth Bolton, he to whom we owe life, and the means of preserving it—if he be prisoner, as seems most likely, use thine interest with these noble lords to be kind to the widow's friend."

"What, my Dame of the Glen?" said Bolton, "thy brow is more withered, as well as mine, since we met last, but thy tongue holds the touch better than my arm. This boy of thine gave me the foil sorely this morning. The Brown Varlet has turned as stout a trooper as I prophesied; and where is White Head?"

"Alas!" said the mother, looking down, "Edward has taken borders, and become a monk of this Abbey."

"A monk and a soldier!—Evil trades both, my good dame. Better have made one a good master fashioner, like old Overstitch, of Holderness. I sighed when I envied you the two bonny children, but I sigh not now to call either the monk or the soldier mine own. The soldier dies in the field, the monk scarce lives in the cloister."

"My dearest mother," said Halbert, "where is Edward—can I not speak with him?"

"He has just left us for the present," said Father Philip, "upon a message from the Lord Abbot."

"And Mary, my dearest mother?" said Halbert.

"Mary Avenel was not far distant, and the three were soon withdrawn from the crowd, to hear and relate their various chances of fortune."

While the subordinate personages thus disposed of themselves, the Abbot held serious discussion with the two Earls, and, partly yielding to their demands, partly defending himself with skill and eloquence, was enabled to make a composition for his Convent, which left it provisionally in no worse situation than before. The Earls were the more reluctant to drive matters to extremity, since he protested, that if urged beyond what his conscience would comply with, he would throw the whole lands of the Monastery into the Queen of Scotland's hands, to be disposed of at her pleasure. This would not have answered the views of the Earls, who were contented, for the time, with a moderate sacrifice of money and lands. Matters being so far settled, the Abbot became anxious for the fate of Sir Pierce Shafton, and implored mercy in his behalf.

"He is a coxcomb," he said, "my lords, but he is a generous, though a vain fool; and it is my firm belief you have this day done him more pain than if you had run a poniard into him."

"Run a needle into him you mean, Abbot," said the Earl of Morton; "by mine honour, I thought this grandson of a fashioner of doublets was descended from a crowned head at least!"

"I hold with the Abbot," said Murray; "there were little honour in surrendering him to Elizabeth, but he shall be sent where he can do her no injury. Our pursuivant and Bolton shall escort him to Dunbar, and ship him off for Flanders.—But soft, here he comes, and leading a female, as I think."

"Lords and others," said the English knight with

great solemnity, "make way for the Lady of Pierce Shafton—a secret which I listed not to make known, till fate, which hath betrayed what I vainly strove to conceal, makes me less desirous to hide that which I now announce to you."

"It is Mysie Happer, the Miller's daughter, on my life!" said Tibb Tacket. "I thought the pride of these Piercies would have a fall."

"It is indeed the lovely Mysinda," said the knight, "whose merits towards her devoted servant deserved higher rank than he had to bestow."

"I suspect, though," said Murray, "that we should not have heard of the Miller's daughter being made a lady, had not the knight proved to be the grandson of a tailor."

"My lord," said Pierce Shafton, "it is poor valour to strike him, that cannot smite again; and I hope you will consider what is due to a prisoner by the law of arms, and say nothing more on this odious subject. When I am once more mine own man, I will find a new road to dignity."

"Shape one, I presume," said the Earl of Morton.

"Nay, Douglas, you will drive him mad," said Murray; "besides, we have other matter in hand.—I must, see Warden wed Glendinning with Mary Avenel, and put him in possession of his wife's castle without delay. It will be best done ere our forces leave these parts."

"And I," said the Miller, "have the like grist to grind; for I hope some one of the good fathers will wed my wench with her gay bridegroom."

"It needs not," said Shafton; "the ceremonial hath been solemnly performed."

"It will not be the worse of another bolting," said the Miller; "it is always best to be sure, as I say when I chance to take multure twice from the same meal-sack."

"Stave the miller off him," said Murray, "or he will worry him dead. The Abbot, my lord, offers us the hospitality of the Convent; I move we should repair thither, Sir Pierce and all of us. I must learn to know the Maid of Avenel—tomorrow I must act as her father—All Scotland shall see how Murray can reward a faithful servant."

Mary Avenel and her lover avoided meeting the Abbot, and took up their temporary abode in a house of the village, where next day their hands were united by the Protestant preacher in presence of the two Earls. On the same day Pierce Shafton and his bride departed, under an escort which was to conduct him to the sea-side, and see him embark for the Low Countries. Early on the following morning the bands of the Earls were under march to the Castle of Avenel, to invest the young bridegroom with the property of his wife, which was surrendered to them without opposition.

But not without those omens which seemed to mark every remarkable event which befell the fated family, did Mary take possession of the ancient castle of her forefathers. The same warlike form which had appeared more than once at Glendearg, was seen by Tibb Tacket and Martin, who returned with their young mistress to partake her altered fortunes. It glided before the cavalcade as they advanced upon the long causeway, paused at each drawbridge, and flourished his hand, as in triumph, as it disappeared under the gloomy archway, which was surmounted by the insignia of the house

of Avoncl. The two trusty servants made their vision only known to Dame Glendinning, who, with much pride of heart, had accompanied her son to see him take his rank among the barons of the land. "Oh, my dear bairn!" she exclaimed, when she heard the tale, "the castle is a grand place to be sure, but I wish ye dianna a' desire to be back in the quiet braccs of Glendearg before the play be played out." But this natural reflection, springing from maternal anxiety, was soon forgotten amid the busy and pleasing task of examining and admiring the new habitation of her son.

While these affairs were passing, Edward had hidden himself and his sorrows in the paternal Tower of Glendearg, where every object was full of matter for bitter reflection. The Abbot's kindness had despatched him thither upon pretence of placing some papers belonging to the Abbey in safety and secrecy; but in reality to prevent his witnessing the triumph of his brother. Through the deserted apartments, the scene of so many bitter reflections, the unhappy youth stalked like a discontented ghost, conjuring up around him at every step new subjects for sorrow and for self-torment. Impatient, at length, of the state of irritation and agonized recollection in which he found himself, he rushed out and walked hastily up the glen, as if to shake off the load which hung upon his mind. The sun was setting when he reached the entrance of Corri-nan-shian, and the recollection of what he had seen when he last visited that haunted ravine, burst on his mind. He was in a humour, however, rather to seek out danger than to avoid it.

"I will face this mystic being," he said; "she foretold the fate which has wrapt me in this dress, — I will know whether she has aught else to tell me of a life which cannot but be miserable."

He failed not to see the White Spirit seated by her accustomed haunt, and singing in her usual low and sweet tone. While she sung she seemed to look with sorrow on her golden zone, which was now diminished to the fineness of a silken thread.

"Fare thee well, thou Holly green;
Thou shalt seldom now be seen,
With all thy glittering garlands bending,
As to greet my slow descending,
Startling the bewilder'd hind,
Who sees thee wave without a wind.
"Farewell, Fountain! now not long
Shalt thou murmur to my song,
While thy crystal bubbles glancing,
Keep the time in mystic dancing,
Rise and swell, are burst and lost.
Like mortal schemes by fortune cross'd.
"The knot of fate at length is tied,
The Churl is Lord, the Maid is bride.
Vainly did my magic sleight
Send the lover from her sight;
Wither bush, and perish well
Fall'n is lofty Avoncl!"

The Vision seemed to weep while she sung; and the words impressed on Edward a melancholy belief, that the alliance of Mary with his brother might be fatal to them both.

Here terminates the First Part of the Benedictine's Manuscript. I have in vain endeavoured to ascertain the precise period of the story, as the dates cannot be exactly reconciled with those of the most accredited histories. But it is astonishing how careless the writers of Utopia are upon these important subjects. I observe that the learned Mr Laurence Tompleton, in his late publication entitled *IVANHOE*, has not only blessed the bed of Edward the Confessor with an offspring unknown to history, with sundry other solecisms of the same kind, but has inverted the order of nature, and feasted his swine with acorns in the midst of summer, All that can be alleged by the warmest admirer of this author amounts to this, — that the circumstances objected to are just as true as the rest of the story; which appears to me (more especially in the matter of the acorns) to be a very imperfect defence, and that the author will do well to profit by Captain Absolute's advice to his servant, and never tell him more lies than are indispensably necessary.

NOTES

The Monastery.

Note A. STAWARTH BOLTON.

Monarwh Bolton took his embroidered red cross from his barret-cap, and putting it into the loop of the boy's bonnet, said, "By this token, which all my people will respect, you will be freed from any importunity on the part of our forayers."

As gallantry of all times and nations has the same mode of thinking and acting, so it often expresses itself by the same symbols. In the civil war 1745-6, a party of Highlanders, under a chieftain of rank, came to Rose Castle, the seat of the Bishop of Carlisle, but then occupied by the family of Squire Dacre of Cumberland. They demanded quarters, which of course were not to be refused to armed men of a strange attire and unknown language. But the domestic represented to the captain of the mountaineers, that the lady of the mansion had been just delivered of a daughter, and expressed her hope, that, under these circumstances, his party would give as little trouble as possible. "God forbid," said the gallant chief, "that I or mine should be the means of adding to a lady's inconvenience at such a time. May I request to see the infant?" The child was brought, and the Highlander, taking his cockade out of his bonnet, and pinning it on the child's breast, "That will be a token," he said, "to any of our people who may come hither, that Donald McDonald of Kinloch-Moldart, has taken the family of Rose Castle under his protection." The lady who received in infancy this page of Highland protection, is now Mary, Lady Clerk of Pennyculk; and on the 10th of June still wears the cockade which was pinned on her breast, with a white rose as a kindred decoration.

Note B. THE FAIRIES.

It was deemed highly imprudent to speak of the fairies, when about to pass the places which they were supposed to haunt.

This superstition continues to prevail, though one would suppose it must now be antiquated. It is only a year or two since an itinerant puppet show-man, who, disclaiming to acknowledge the profession of Gines de Passamonté, called himself an artist from Vauxhall, brought a complaint of a singular nature before the author, as Sheriff of Selkirkshire. The singular dexterity with which the show-man had exhibited the machinery of his little stage, had, upon a Selkirk fair-day, excited the eager curiosity of some mechanics of Galashiels. These men, from no worse motive than that could be discovered than a thirst after knowledge beyond their sphere, committed a burglary upon the barn in which the puppets had been consigned to repose, and carried them off in the nook of their plaids, when returning from Selkirk to their own village.

"But with the morning cool reflection came."

The party found, however, they could not make Punch dance, and that the whole troop were equally respectable; they had also, perhaps, some apprehensions of the Rhinoceros of the district; and, willing to be quit of their booty, they left the puppets stacked in a grove by the side of the brook, where they were sure to be touched by the first beams of the rising sun. Here a shepherd, who was on foot with sunrise to pen his master's sheep on a field of turnips, to his utter astonishment, saw this train, profusely gay, sitting in the little grotto. His examination proceeded thus:—

Sheriff. You saw these gay-looking things? what did you think they were?

Shepherd. On, I am no that free to say what I might think they were.

Sheriff. Come, lad, I must have a direct answer—who did you think they were?

Shepherd. On, sir, truth I am no that free to say that I said what I might think they were.

Sheriff. Come, come sir! I ask you distinctly, did you think they were the fairies you saw?

Shepherd. Indeed, sir, and I wina say but I might think it was the Good Neighbours.

Thus unwillingly was he brought to allude to the irritable and capacious inhabitants of fairy land.

Note C. DRAWBRIDGE AT BRIDGE-END.

A bridge of the very peculiar construction described in the text, actually existed at a small hamlet about a mile and a half above Melrose, called from the circumstance Bridge-end. It is thus noticed in Gordon's *Her Septentrionale*:—

"In another journey through the south parts of Scotland, about a mile and a half from Melrose, in the shire of Teviotdale, I saw the remains of a curious bridge over the river Tweed, consisting of three octagonal pillars, or rather towers, standing within the water, without any arches to join them. The middle one, which is the most entire, has a door towards the north, and I suppose, another opposite one toward the south, which I could not see without crossing the water. In the middle of this tower is a projection or cornice surrounding it: the whole is hollow from the door upwards, and now open at the top, near which is a small window. I was informed that not long ago a countryman and his family lived in this tower—and got his livelihood by laying out planks from pillar to pillar, and conveying passengers over the river. Whether this be ancient or modern, I know not; but as it is singular in its kind, I have thought fit to exhibit it."

The vestiges of this uncommon species of bridge still exist, and the author has often seen the foundations of the columns when drifting down the Tweed at night, for the purpose of killing salmon by torch-light. Mr John Mercer of Bridge-end recollects, that about fifty years ago the pillars were visible above water; and the late Mr David Kyle of the George Inn, Melrose told the author that he saw a stone taken from the river bearing this inscription:—

"I, G. John Pringle of Palmer state,
Gave a hundred marks of powder and red,
To help to bigg my brig over Tweed."

Pringle of Galashiels, afterwards of Whythbank, was the Baron to whom the bridge belonged.

Note D. BORNERS.

To *borne*, in Scotland, is to exact free quarters against the will of the landlord. It is declared equivalent to theft, by a statute passed in the year 1445. The great chieftains oppressed the Monasteries very much by exactions of this nature. The community of Aberbrothwick complained of an Earl of Angus. I think who was in the regular habit of visiting them once a-year with a train of a thousand horse; and abiding till the whole winter provisions of the convent were exhausted.

Note E. MACFARLANE'S GEESE.

A brood of wild-geese, which long frequented one of the uppermost islands in Loch-Lomond, called Inch-Tavoe, were supposed to have some mysterious connection with the ancient family of MacFarlane of that ilk, and it is said were never seen after the ruin and extinction of that house. The MacFarlanes had a house and garden upon that same island of Inch-Tavoe. Here James VI. was, on one occasion, regaled by the chieftain. His Majesty had been previously much amused by the geese passing each other on the Loch. But, when one which was brought to table, was found to be tough and ill fed, James observed,—"that MacFarlane's geese liked their play better, than their meat," a proverb which has been current ever since.

Note F. EPIGRAMS.

There are many instances to be met with in the ancient dramas of this whimsical and concealed custom of persons who form an intimacy, distinguishing each other by some quaint epithet. In *Every Man out of his Humour*, there is a humorous debate upon names most fit to bind the relation betwixt Scogillardo and Cavallero Shift, which ends by adopting those of Countenance and Resolution. What is more to the point is in the speech of Hledon, a voluptuary and a courtier in *Cynthia's Revels*. "You know that I call Maum Philantia my Honour, and she calls me her AMBITION. Now, when I meet her in the presence, anon, I will come to her and say, 'Sweet Honour, I have hitherto contented my sense with the lilies of your hand, and now I will taste the roses of your hip.' To which she cannot but blushing answer, 'Nay, now you are too ambitious!' and then do I reply, 'I cannot be too ambitious of Hoguor, sweet lady. Will't not be good?'"—I think there is some remnant of this foppery preserved in unaoaic lodges, where each brother is distinguished by a name in the Lodge, signifying some abstract quality, as Discretion, or the like. See the poems of Gavin Wilson.

Note G. CLOWLAND YORKE, AND STUKELY.

"Yorke," says Camden, "was a Londoner, a man of loose and dissolute behaviour, and deeply, rashly audacious,—famous in his time amongst the common bullies and swaggers, as being the first that, to the great admiration of quany at his boldness, brought into England the bold and dangerous way of fencing with the rapier in duelling. Whereas, till that time, the English used to fight with long swords and bucklers, striking with the edge, and thought it no part of man either to push or strike beneath the girdle."

Having a command in the Low Countries, Yorke revolted to the Spaniards, and died miserably, poisoned, as was supposed, by his new allies. Three years afterwards, his bones were dug up and gibbeted by the command of the States of Holland.

Thomas Stukely, another distinguished gallant of the time, was bred a merchant, being the son of a rich clothier in the west. He wedded the daughter and heiress of a wealthy alderman of London, named Curtis, after whose death he squandered the riches he thus acquired in all manner of extravagance. His wife, whose fortune supplied his waste, represented to him that he ought to make more of her. Stukely replied, "I will make as much of thee, believe me, as it is possible for any to do;" and he kept his word in one sense, having stripped her even of her wearing apparel, before he finally ran away from her.

Having fled to Italy, he contrived to impose upon the Pope, with a plan of invading Ireland, for which he levied soldiers, and made some preparations; but ended by engaging himself and his troops in the service of King Sebastian of Portugal. He sailed with that prince on his fatal voyage to Barbary, and fell with him at the battle of Alcanzar.

Stukely, as one of the first gallants of the time, has had the honour to be chronicled in song, in Evans' *Old Ballads*, vol. iii. edition 1810. His fate is also introduced in a tragedy, by George Poul, as has been supposed, called the *Battle of Alcanzar*, from which play Dryden is alleged to have taken the idea of Don Sebastian; if so, it is surprising he omitted a character so congenial to King Charles the Second's time, as the witty, brave, and profligate Thomas Stukely.

Note H. AVENEL CASTLE.

It is in vain to search near Melrose for any such castle as is here described. The lakes at the head of the Yarrow, and those at the rise of the water of Aisle, present no object of the kind. But in Yetholm Loch, (a romantic sheet of water, in the dry march, as it is called,) there are the remains of a fortress called Lochside Tower, which, like the supposed castle of Avenel, is built upon an island, and connected with the land by a causeway. It is much smaller than the Castle of Avenel is described, consisting only of a single ruinous tower.

Note I. JULIAN AVENEL.

If it were necessary to name a prototype for this brutal, licentious, and cruel border chief, in an age which showed but too many such, the Laird of Black Ormiston might be selected for that purpose. He was a friend and confidant of Bothwell, and an agent in Henry Darnley's murder. At his last stage, he was, like other great offenders, a seeming penitent; and, as his confession to six diverse gentlemen and servants being in the chamber, he said, "For God's sake, sit with me," (that is, beside his share in Darnley's death,) "for the which God is this day punishing me; for of all men on the earth, I have been one of the proudest, and most high-minded, and stout unclean of my body. But specially I have shed the innocent blood of one Michael Hunter with my own hands. Alas, therefore! Because the said Michael, having me lying on my back, having a fork in his hand, might have slain me if

he had pleased, and did it not, which of all things grieves me most in conscience. Alas, in a rage, I hanged a poor man for a horse;—with many other wicked deeds, for which I ask my God mercy. It is not unusual I have been wicked, considering the wicked company that ever I have been in, but specially within the seven years by-past, in which I never saw two good men or one good deed, but all kind of wickedness, and yet God would not suffer me to be lost."—See the whole confession in the State Trials.

Another worthy of the Borders, called Geordy Bourne, of somewhat subordinate rank, was a similar picture of profligacy. He had fallen into the hands of Sir Robert Carey, then Warden of the English East Marches, who gives the following account of his prisoner's confession:—

"When all things were quiet, and the watch set at night, after supper, about ten of the clock, I took one of my men's liveries and put it about me, and took two other of my servants with me in their liveries; and we three, as the Warden's men, came to the Provost Marshal's where Bourne was, and were let into his chamber. We sat down by him, and told him that we were desirous to see him, because we heard he was stout and valiant, and true to his friend, and that we were sorry our master could not be moved to save his life. He voluntarily of himself said, that he had lived long enough to do so many villainies as he had done; and withal told us, that he had lain with above forty men's wives, what in England what in Scotland; and that he had killed seven Englishmen with his own hands, cruelly murdering them; and that he had spent his whole time in whoring, drinking, stealing, and taking deep revenge for night offences. He seemed to be very penitent, and much desired a minister for the comfort of his soul. We promised him to let our master know his desire, who, we knew, would promptly grant it. We took leave of him; and presently I took order that Mr Selby, a very honest preacher, should go to him; and not stir from him till his exercise the next morning; for after I had heard his own confession, I was resolved no conditions should save his life, and so took order, that at the gates opening the next morning, he should be carried to execution, which accordingly was performed."—*Memoirs of Sir Robert Carey, Earl of Monmouth.*

Note K. FOPPERY OF THE SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

Sir Francis Shafton's extreme love of dress was an attribute of the coxcombs of this period. The display made by their forefathers was in the numbers of their retinue; but as the actual influence of the nobility began to be restrained both in France and England by the increasing power of the crown, the indigence of vanity in personal display became more individual. There are many allusions to this change of custom in Shakespeare and other dramatic writers, where the reader may find mention made of

"Bonds entered into
For gay apparel against the triumph day."

Jonson informs us, that for the first entrance of a gallant, "twere good you turned four or five hundred acres of your best land into two or three trunks of apparel."—*Every Man out of his Humour.*

In the Memoirs of the Somerville family, a curious instance occurs of this fashionable species of extravagance. In the year 1597, when James V. brought over his short-lived bride from France, the Lord Somerville of the day was so profuse in the expense of his apparel, that the money which he borrowed on the occasion was compensated by a perpetual annuity of three-score pounds Scottish, payable out of the barony of Carnwath till doomsday, which was assigned by the creditor to Saint Magdalena's Chapel. By this deep expense the Lord Somerville had rendered himself so glorious in apparel, that the King, who saw so brave a gallant enter the gate of Holyrood, followed by only two pages, called upon several of the courtiers to ascertain who it could be who was so richly dressed and so slightly attended, and he was not recognized until he entered the presence chamber. "You are very brave, my lord," said the King, as he received his homage; "but where are all your men and attendants?" The Lord Somerville readily answered, "If it please your Majesty, here they are," pointing to the lace that was on his own and his pages' clothes; whereas the King laughed heartily, and having surveyed the show more nearly, sent him drive away with it all, and let him have his stout band of spears again.

There is a scene in Jonson's *Every Man out of his Humour*, (Act IV. Scene 5) in which a Supper of the time gives an account of the effects of a duel on the clothes of himself and his opponent, and never departs a syllable from the catalogue of his wardrobe. We shall hear in evidence that the foppery of our ancestors was not inferior to that of our own time.

"Fustian. Good faith, signior, now you speak of a quarrel, I'll account you with a difference that happened between a gallant and myself, Sir Fustian. You know this if I should name him—Sir Lancelot."

"Fust. Lancelot! What insensibility chimes interposed itself to your two loves?"

"*Fess.* Faith, sir, the same that sundered Agamemnon and great Thetis' son; but let the cause excuse, sir. He sent me a challenge, mist with some few braves, which I restored; and, in fine, we met. Now indeed, sir, I must tell you, he did offer at first very desperately, but without judgment; for look you, sir, I cast myself into this figure; now he came violently on, and withal advancing his rapier to strike, I thought to have took his arm, for he had left his body to my election; and I was sure he could not recover his guard. Sir, I mist my purpose in his arm, raised his doublet sleeves, ran him close by the left cheek and through his hair. He, again, light the hilt— I had on a gold cable hat-band, then new come up, about a murrey French hat I had; cuts my hat-band, and yet it was many golden hairs' work, cuts my brim, which, by good fortune, being thick embroidered with gold twist and spangles, disappointed the force of the blow; nevertheless it grazed on my shoulder, takes me away six puris of an Italian cut-work band I wore, cost me three pounds in the Exchange but three days before—

"*Fess.* This was a strange encounter.

"*Punt.* Nay, you shall hear, sir. With this, we both fell out and breathed. Now, upon the second sign of his assault, I betook me to my former manner of defence; he, on the other side, abandoned his bow to the same danger as before, and follows me still with blows; but I, being loath to take the deadly advantage that lay before me of his left side, made a kind of stramazoun, ran him up to the hilt through the doublet, through the shirt, and yet missed the skin. He, making a reverse blow, falls upon my embowed girdle,—I had thrown off the hangers a little before,—strikes off a skirt of a thick-lined satin doublet I had, lined with four coffeats, cuts off two paces embroidered with pearl, sends through the drawings-out of time, enters the linings, and skips the flesh.

"*Cor.* I wonder he speaks not of his wrought shirt.

"*Fess.* Here, in the opinion of mutual damage we paused. But, ere I proceed, I must tell you, signior, that in the last encounter, not having leisure to put off my silver spurs, one of the rowels catched hold of the ruffles of my boot, and, being Spanish leather and subject to tear, overthrew me, rends me two pair of silk stockings that I put on, being somewhat of a raw morning, a peach colour and another, and strikes me some half-inch deep into the side of the calf: He, seeing the blood come, presently takes horse and away: I being bound up my wound with a piece of my wrought shirt—

"*Cor.* It comes it in there.

"*Fess.* He after him, and, lighting at the court-gate both together, embraced, and marched hand in hand up into the presence. Was not this business well carried?

"*Maci.* Well! yes; and by this we can guess what apparel the gentlemen wore.

"*Punt.* 'Fore valour! It was a disengagement begun with much resolution, maintained with as much prowess, and ended with more humanity."

NOTE L.

GOOD FAITH OF THE BORDERERS.

As some atonement for their laxity of morals on most occasions, the Borderers were severe observers of the faith which they had pledged, even to an enemy. If any person broke his word so plighted, the individual to whom faith had not been observed, used to bring to the next Border-meeting a glove hung on the point of a spear, and proclaim to Scots and English the name of the defaulter. This was accounted so great a disgrace to all connected with him, that his own clansmen sometimes destroyed him, to escape the infamy he had brought on them.

Constable, a spy engaged by Sir Ralph Sadler, talks of two Border thieves, whom he used as his guides.—"That they would not care to steal, and yet that they would not betray any man that trusts in them, for all the gold in Scotland or in France. They are my guides and outlaws. If they would betray me they might get their pardons, and cause me to be hanged; but I have tried them ere this."—*Sadler's Letters during the Northern Intercession.*

NOTE M.

INDULGENCES OF THE MONKS.

The *offices, caritas*, and boiled almonds, of which Abbot Boniface speaks, were special occasions for enjoying luxuries, afforded to the monks by grants from different sovereigns, or from other benefactors to the convent. These are of those charters called *de Pisanola Centum Librarum*. By this charter, which is very curious, our Robert Bruce, on the 10th January, and in the twelfth year of his reign, assigns, out of the customs of Berwick, and selling them, out of the customs of Edinburgh or Haddington, the sum of one hundred pounds, at the half-yearly terms of Pentecost and Saint Martin's in winter, to the abbot and community of the monks of Melrose. The precise purpose of this annuity is to furnish to each of the monks of the said monastery, while placed as food in the refectory, an extra meal of rice boiled with milk, or of almonds, or peas, or other pulse of that kind which could be procured in the country. This addition to their commons is to be entitled the King's meal. And it is declared, that although any monk should,

from some honest apology, want appetite or inclination to eat of the king's meal, his share should, nevertheless, be placed on the table with those of his brethren, and afterwards carried to the gate and given to the poor. "Neither is it our pleasure," continues the bountiful sovereign, "that the dinner, which is or ought to be served up to the said monks according to their abbot's rule, should be diminished in quantity, or rendered inferior in quality, on account of this our meal, so furnished as aforesaid." It is, moreover, provided, that the abbot, with the consent of the most sage of his brethren, shall name a prudent and discreet monk for receiving, directing, and expending, all matters concerning this annuity for the benefit of the community, agreeably to the royal desire and intention, rendering a faithful account thereof to the abbot and superiors of the same convent. And the same charter declares the king's farther pleasure, that the said men of religion should be bound yearly and for ever, in acknowledgment of the above donation, to clothe fifteen poor men at the feast of Saint Martin in winter, and to feed them on the same day, delivering to each of them four ells of large or broad, or six ells of narrow cloth, and to each also a new pair of shoes or sandals, according to their order; and if the said monks shall fail in their engagements, or any of them, it is the king's will that the fault shall be redeemed by a double performance of what has been promised, to be executed at the sight of the chief forester of Etrick for the time being, and before the return of Saint Martin's day succeeding that on which the omission has taken place.

Of this charter, respecting the pittance of L.100 assigned to furnish the monks of Melrose with a daily mess of boiled rice, almonds, or other pulse, to mend their commons, the antiquarian reader will be pleased, doubtless, to see the original.

CARTA REGIS ROBERTI I. ABBATI ET CONVENTUI DE MELROSE.

Carta de Pisanola Centum Librarum.

"Robertus Dei gracia Rex Scottorum omnibus probis hominibus totius terre sue Salutem. Sciatis nos pro salute anime nostre et pro salute animarum antecessorum et successorum nostrorum Regum Scocie Dedimus Concessimus et hac presenti Carta nostra confirmamus Deo et Beate Marie virginis et Religiose viris Abbati et Conventui de Melrose et eorum successoribus in perpetuum Centum Libras Sterlingorum Annui redditus singulis annis percipiendas de firmis nostris Burghi Berwick super Tweedam ad terminis Pentecostie et Sancti Martini in hyeme pro equali portione vel de nova Custumia nostra Burgh predicti et firme nostre predictae ad dictam summam pecunie sufficere non poterant vel de nova Custumia nostra Burghorum nostrorum de Edenburgh et de Haddington Si firme nostre et Custumia nostra ville Berwick aliquo casu contingente ad hoc forte non sufficiant. Ita quod dicta summa pecunie Centum Librarum eis annuatim integre et absque contradictione aliqua plenarie percipiatur pro cunctis aliis quibuscunque assignacionibus per nos factis sub facienda ad inveniendum in perpetuum singulis diebus cultibus monacho monasterii predicti comedendi in Refectorio unum sufficiens ferulum florum florum florum cum lacte, amigdalarum vel plurimum five aliorum ciborum comendabile condicione inventorum in patria et illud ferulum ferulum Regis vocabitur in eternum. Et si aliquis monachus ex aliqua causa honesta de dicto ferulo comedere voluerit vel potest non poterit non minus attamen sibi de dicto ferulo ministratur et ad partem pro pauperibus deportetur. Nec volumus quod occasione feruli nostri predicti prandium dicti Conventus de quo antiquitus communiter eis deserviri sive ministrari solebat in aliquo peioretur seu diminuat. Volumus inasper et ordinamus quod Abbas ejusdem monasterii qui pro tempore fuerit de consensu sanctorum de Conventu specialiter considerat unum monachum providum et discretum ad recipiendum ordinandum et expendendum totam summam pecunie memorate pro utilitate conventus secundum votum et intentionem mentis nostre superius annotatum et ad reddendum fidele compungit eorum Abbatem et Majoribus de Conventu singulis annis de pecunia sic recepta. Et volumus quod dicti religioi teneant annuatim in perpetuum pro predicta donacione nostra ad percipiendum nostri memoriam vestre quiddecim pauperes ad festum Sancti Martini in hieme et eodem ebate eodem die liberare eorum cultibus quatuor unius panis grossi et lagis vel sex unius panis scilicet et eorum cultibus unum novum pro potest latius de ordine suo. Et si dicti religioi in percipiendis aliquo premissorum aliquo anno defecerint volumus quod illud quod minus percipiendum fuerit dupliciter diebus magis necessariis pro viam capitalis foretarii nostri de Solirick, qui pro tempore fuerit. Et quod dicta duplicatio fiat ante natale domini proximo sequens festum Sancti Martini predictum. In cuius rei testimonium presentis Carte nostre sigillum nostrum premissum apponi. Testibus venerabilibus in Christo patribus Willielmo, Johanne, Willielmo et Davide Sancti Andree, Gualterio, Dunhaldestis de Moravia ecclesiarum dei gracia episcopis Bernardo Abbate de Abbtrothbeck Cancellario, Duncan, Mallo, et Hugone de Epi de Strathin et de Ros, Comitibus Waltere Senescallo Scotia. Jacobo domini de Duglas et Alexandro, Franch Camerario nostro Sancti militibus. Apud Abbtrothbeck, decimo die Januarii. Anno Regni nostri vicesimo.

Note N

PEDIGREE OF THE DOUGLAS FAMILY

The late excellent and laborious antiquary Mr George Chalmers, has rebuked the want of the House of Douglas, or rather of Hume of Godscroft their historian but with less than his wonted accuracy. In the first volume of his *Caledonia*, he quotes the passage in Godscroft for the purpose of confuting it.

The historian (of the Douglasses) cries out, "We do not know them in the fountain but in the stream not in the root, but in the stem for we know not which is the mean man that did rise above the vulgar." This assumption Mr Chalmers considers ill timed, and alleges that if the historian had attended more to research than to declamation he might easily have seen the first meanman of this renowned family. This he alleges to have been one Theobaldus Flammatius, or Theobald the Fleming, to whom Arnold Abbot of Kelso, between the year 1147 and 1160, granted certain lands on Douglas water by a deed which Mr Chalmers conceives to be the first link of the chain of title deeds to Douglassdale. Hence, he says the family must renounce their family domain, or acknowledge this obscure Fleming as their ancestor. Theobald the Fleming, it is so now, fedud did not himself assume the name of Douglas "but," says the antiquary, "his son William, who inherited his estate, called himself, and was named by others, De Douglas," and he refers to the deeds in which he is so designed. Mr Chalmers's full argument may be found in the first volume of his *Caledonia* p. 579.

This proposition is one which a Scotsman will admit unwillingly, and only upon undoubted testimony and he it is liable to strong grounds of challenge the present author with all the respect to Mr Chalmers which his zealous and effectual researches merit, is not unwilling to take this opportunity to state some plausible grounds for doubting that Theobaldus Flammatius was either the father of the first William de Douglas, or in the slightest degree connected with the Douglas family.

It must first be observed, that there is no reason whatever, for concluding Theobaldus Flammatius to be the father of William de Douglas except that they both held lands upon the small river of Douglas, and that there are two strong presumptions to the contrary. For first, the father being named Fleming, there seems no good reason why the son should have assumed a different designation, secondly, there does not occur a single instance of the name of Theobald during the long line of the Douglas pedigree, an omission very unlikely to take place had the original father of the race been so called. These are secondary considerations indeed, but they are important in so far as they exclude any support of Mr Chalmers's system, except from the point which he has rather assumed than proved, namely, that the lands granted to Theobald the Fleming were the same which were granted to William de Douglas, and which constituted the original domain of which we find this powerful family lords.

Now, it happens, singularly enough, that the lands granted by the Abbot of Kelso to Theobaldus Flammatius are not the same of which William de Douglas was in possession. Nay, it would appear, from comparing the charter granted to Theobaldus Flammatius, that though situated on the water of Douglas, they never made a part of the barony of that name, and therefore cannot be the same with those held by William de Douglas

in the succeeding generation. But if William de Douglas do not succeed Theobaldus Flammatius, there is no more reason for holding these two persons to be father and son than if they had lived in different provinces, and we are still as far from having discovered the first mean man of the Douglas family as Hume of Godscroft was in the 16th century. We leave the question to antiquaries and genealogists.

Note O

PEDIGREE OF THE STEWART FAMILY

To atone to the memory of the learned and indefatigable Chalmers for having ventured to impeach his genealogical proposition concerning the descent of the Douglasses, we are bound to render him our grateful thanks for the felicitous light which he has thrown on that of the House of Stewart, still more important to Scottish history.

The acute pen of Lord Hailes, which, like the spear of Ithuriel, conjured so many shadows from Scottish history, had dismissed among the rest those of Banquo and Fiescoe, the rejection of which fables left the illustrious family of Stewart without an ancestor beyond Walter the son of Allan, who is alluded to in the text. The researches of our late learned antiquary detected in this Walter, the descendant of Allan, the son of Fiescoe, who obtained from William the Conqueror the Castle of Oswestry in Shropshire, and was the father of an illustrious line of English nobles, by his first son, William and by his second son, Walter, the progenitor of the royal family of Stewart.

Note P.

THE DWARF SPIRIT

The contrivance of providing the irritable vanity of Sir Pierce Shafton, by presenting him with a bodkin, indicative of his descent from a tailor, is borrowed from a German romance, by the celebrated Trank, called *Das Fater Tanchen*, i. e. The Dwarf Peter. The being who gives name to the tale, is the Burgomaster, or castle spectre, of a German family, whom he aids with his counsel, as he defends their castle by his supernatural power. But the Dwarf Peter is so unfortunate an adviser, that all his counsels though producing success in the immediate result, are in the issue attended with mischief and with guilt. The youthful baron, the owner of the haunted castle, falls in love with a maiden, the daughter of a neighbouring count, a man of great pride, who refuses him the hand of the young lady, on account of his own superiority of descent. The lover, repulsed and affronted, returns to take counsel with the Dwarf Peter, how he may silence the count, and obtain the victory in the argument, the next time they enter on the topic of pedigree. The dwarf gives his patron or pupil a horse shoe, instructing him to give it to the count when he is next giving himself superior airs on the subject of his family. It has the effect accordingly. The count, understanding it as an allusion to a misalliance of one of his ancestors with the daughter of a blacksmith, is thrown into a dreadful passion with the young lover the consequences of which are the seduction of the young lady, and the daughter of her father.

If we suppose the dwarf to represent the corrupt part of human nature, — that "law in our members which wars against the law of our minds," — the work forms an ingenious allegory.

THE ABBOT

A SEQUEL

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

COPYRIGHT EDITION



"Well marked the object of her anxiety, and seizing the child's under-dress in its mouth, not

WAVERLEY NOVELS.

The Abbot;

BEING THE SEQUEL TO THE MONASTERY.

INTRODUCTION—(1831.)

From what is said in the Introduction to the Monastery, it must necessarily be inferred, that the Author considered that romance as something very like a failure. It is true, the booksellers did not complain of the sale, because, unless on very felicitous occasions, or on those which are equally the reverse, literary popularity is not gained or lost by a single publication. Leisure must be allowed for the tide both to flow and ebb. But I was conscious that, in my situation, not to advance was in some degree to recede, and being naturally unwilling to think that the principle of effecy lay in myself, I was at least desirous to know of a certainty, whether the degree of discountenance which I had incurred, was now owing to an ill-managed story, or an ill-chosen subject.

I was never, I confess, one of those who are willing to suppose the brains of an author to be a kind of milk, which will not stand above a single creaming, and who are eternally harping to young authors to husband their efforts, and to be chary of their reputation, lest it grow hackneyed in the eyes of men. Perhaps I was, and have always been, the more indifferent to the degree of estimation in which I might be held as an author, because I did not put so high a value on many of the things which are termed literary reputation. It is true, I have been at least upon the verge of popularity, and I have been to my share, but I have never been worsted in my estimation to any great degree. I was satisfied at my success in the Monastery, in which Charles had in some measure anticipated me; I was, nevertheless, far from thinking that the novelist or romance-writer stands high in the ranks of literature. But I spare the reader further egotism on this subject, as I have expressed my opinion very fully in the Introductory Epistle to the Fortunes of Nigel, first edition; and, although it is composed in an inaugural character, it is as sincere and candid as if it had been written "without my gown and band."

In a word, when I considered myself as having been unsuccessful in the Monastery, I was tempted to try whether I could not restore, even at the risk of totally losing, my so called reputation, by a new hazard—I looked round my library, and could not but observe, that, from the time of Chaucer to that of Byron, the most popular authors had been the most prolific. Even the aristarch Johnson allowed that the quality of readiness and profusion had a merit in itself, independent of the intrinsic value of the composition. Talking of Churchill, I believe, who had little merit in his prejudiced eyes, he allowed him that of fortility, with some such qualification as this, "A crab-apple can bear but crabs after all; but there is a great difference in favour of that which bears a large quantity of fruit, however indifferent, and that which produces only a few."

Looking more attentively at the patriarchs of literature, whose career was as long as it was brilliant, I thought I perceived that in the busy and prolonged course of exertion, there were no doubt occasional failures, but that still those who were favorites of their age triumphed over these miscarriages. By the new efforts which they made, their errors were obliterated, they became identified with the literature of their country, and after having long received law from the critics, came in some degree to impose it. And when such a writer was at length called from the scene, his death first made the public wonder what a large share he had occupied in their attention. I recollected a passage in Grimm's Correspondence, that while the unexhausted Voltaire went from tract after tract to the very close of a long life, the first impression made by such as it appeared, was, that it was inferior to his predecessors; an opinion adopted from the general idea, that the Patriarch of Ferney must at last have got tired from which he was to decline. But the opinion of the public finally ranked in succession the last of Voltaire's Essays on the same footing with those which had formerly charmed the

French nation. The inference from this and similar facts seemed to me to be, that new works were often judged of by the public, not so much from their own intrinsic merit, as from extrinsic ideas which readers had previously formed with regard to them, and over which a writer might hope to triumph by patience and by exertion. There is a risk in the attempt;

"If he fall in, good night, or sink or swim."

But this is a chance incident to every literary attempt, and by which men of a sanguine temper are little moved.

I may illustrate what I mean, by the feelings of most men in travelling. If we have found any stage particularly tedious, or in an especial degree interesting, particularly short, or much longer than we expected, our imaginations are so apt to exaggerate the original impression, that, on repeating the journey, we usually find that we have considerably over-rated the predominating quality, and the road appears to be duller or more pleasant, shorter or more tedious, than what we expected, and, consequently, than what is the actual case. It requires a third or fourth journey to enable us to form an accurate judgment of its beauty, its length, or its other attributes.

In the same manner, the public, judging of a new work, which it receives perhaps with little expectation, if surprised into applause, becomes very often ecstatic, gives a great deal more approbation than is due, and elevates the child of its immediate favour to a rank which, as it affects the author, it is equally difficult to keep, and painful to lose. If, on this occasion, the author trembles at the height to which he is raised, and becomes afraid of the shadow of his own renown, he may indeed retire from the lottery with the prize which he has drawn, but, in future ages, his honour will be only in proportion to his labours. If, on the contrary, he rushes again into the lists, he is sure to be judged with severity proportioned to the former favour of the public. If he be daunted by a bad reception on this second occasion, he may again become a stranger to the arena. If, on the contrary, he can keep his ground, and stand the shuttlecock's fate, of being struck up and down, he will probably, at length, hold with some certainty the level in public opinion which he may be found to deserve; and he may perhaps boast of arresting the general attention, in the same manner as the Bachelor Samson Carras, of fixing the weathercock La Giralda of Sevil, for weeks, months, or years, that is, for as long as the wind shall uniformly blow from one quarter. To this degree of popularity the author had the hardihood to aspire, while, in order to attain it, he assumed the daring resolution to keep himself in the view of the public by frequent appearances before them.

It must be added, that the author's incognito gave him the greater courage to renew his attempts to please the public, and an advantage similar to that which Jack the Giant-killer received from his

coat of darkness. In sending the Abbot forth so soon after the Monastery, he had used the well-known practice recommended by Bassanio:—

"In my school days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot another of the self same flight,
The self same way, with more advised watch,
To find the other forth."

And, to continue the simile, his shafts, like those of the lesser Ajax, were discharged more readily than the archer was as inaccessible to criticism, personally speaking, as the Grecian archer under his brother's sevenfold shield.

Should the reader desire to know upon what principles the Abbot was expected to amend the fortune of the Monastery, I have first to request his attention to the Introductory Epistle addressed to the imaginary Captain Clutterbuck; a mode by which, like his predecessors in this walk of fiction, the real author makes use of his *dramatis personæ* the means of communicating his own sentiments to the public, somewhat more artificially than by a direct address to the readers. A pleasing French writer of fairy tales, Monsieur Pajon, author of the History of Prince Soly, has set a diverting example of the same machinery, where he introduces the presiding Genius of the land of Romance conversing with one of the personages of the tale.

In this Introductory Epistle, the author communicates, in confidence, to Captain Clutterbuck, his sense that the White Lady had not met the taste of the times, and his reason for withdrawing her from the scene. The author did not deem it equally necessary to be candid respecting another alteration. The Monastery was designed, at first, to have contained some supernatural agency, arising out of the fact, that Melrose had been the place of deposit of the great Robert Bruce's heart. The writer shrank, however, from filling up, in this particular, the sketch as it was originally traced; nor did he venture to resume, in the continuation, the subject which he had left unattempted in the original work. Thus, the incident of the discovery of the heart, which occupies the greater part of the Introduction to the Monastery, is a mystery unnecessarily introduced, and which remains at last very imperfectly explained. In this particular, I was happy to shroud myself by the example of the author of "Caleb Williams," who never condescends to inform us of the actual contents of that Iron Chest which makes such a figure in his interesting work, and gives the name to Mr Colman's drama.

The public had some cause to enquire into this matter, but it seemed indifferent policy in the author to give the explanation. For, whatever praise may be due to the ingenuity which brings to a general combination all the loose threads of a narrative, like the knitter at the finishing of her stocking, I am greatly deceived if in many cases a superior advantage is not attained, by the air of reality which the deficiency of explanation attaches to a work written on a different system. In life itself, many things

befall every mortal, of which the individual never knows the real cause or origin; and were we to point out the most marked distinction between a real and a fictitious narrative, we would say, that the former, in reference to the remote causes of the events it relates, is obscure, doubtful, and mysterious; whereas, in the latter case, it is a part of the author's duty to afford satisfactory details upon the causes of the separate events he has recorded, and, in a word, to account for every thing. The reader, like Mungo in the Padlock, will not be satisfied with hearing what he is not made fully to comprehend.

I omitted, therefore, in the Introduction to the Abbot, any attempt to explain the previous story, or to apologize for unintelligibility.

Neither would it have been prudent to have endeavoured to proclaim, in the Introduction to the Abbot, the real spring, by which I hoped it might attract a greater degree of interest than its immediate predecessor. A taking title, or the announcement of a popular subject, is a recipe for success much in favour with booksellers, but which authors will not always find efficacious. The cause is worth a moment's examination.

There occur in every country some peculiar historical characters, which are, like a spell or charm, sovereign to excite curiosity and attract attention, since every one in the slightest degree interested in the land which they belong to, has heard much of them, and longs to hear more. A tale turning on the fortunes of Alfred or Elizabeth in England, or of Wallace or Bruce in Scotland, is sure by the very announcement to excite public curiosity to a considerable degree, and ensure the publisher's being relieved of the greater part of an impression, even before the contents of the work are known. This is of the last importance to the bookseller, who is at once, to use a technical phrase, "brought home," all his outlay being repaid. But it is a different case with the author, since it cannot be denied that we are apt to feel least satisfied with the works of which we have been induced, by titles and laudatory advertisements, to entertain exaggerated expectations. The intention of the work has been anticipated,

and misconceived or misrepresented, and although the difficulty of executing the work again reminds us of Hotspur's task of "o'er-walking a current roaring loud," yet the adventurer must look for more ridicule if he fails, than applause if he executes, his undertaking.

Notwithstanding a risk, which should make authors pause ere they adopt a theme which, exciting general interest and curiosity, is often the preparative for disappointment, yet it would be an injudicious regulation which should deter the poet or painter from attempting to introduce historical portraits, merely from the difficulty of executing the task in a satisfactory manner. Something must be trusted to the generous impulse, which often thrusts an artist upon feats of which he knows the difficulty, while he trusts courage and exertion may afford the means of surmounting it.

It is especially when he is sensible of losing ground with the public, that an author may be justified in using with address, such selection of subject or title as is most likely to procure a rehearing. It was with these feelings of hope and apprehension, that I ventured to awaken, in a work of fiction, the memory of Queen Mary, so interesting by her wit, her beauty, her misfortunes, and the mystery which still does, and probably always will, overhang her history. In doing so, I was aware that failure would be a conclusive disaster, so that my task was something like that of an enchanter who raises a spirit over whom he is uncertain of possessing an effectual control; and I naturally paid attention to such principles of composition, as I conceived were best suited to the historical novel.

Enough has been already said to explain the purpose of composing the Abbot. The historical references are, as usual, explained in the notes. That which relates to Queen Mary's escape from Lochleven Castle, is a more minute account of that romantic adventure, than is to be found in the histories of the period.

AMSTERDAM,
1st January, 1731.

INTRODUCTORY EPISTLE

FROM

THE AUTHOR OF "WAVERLEY."

TO

CAPTAIN CLUTTERBUCK,

LATE OF HIS MAJESTY'S — REGIMENT OF INFANTRY.

DEAR CAPTAIN, .

I AM sorry to observe, by your last favour, that you disapprove of the numerous retrenchments and alterations which I have been under the necessity of making on the Manuscript of your friend, the Benedictine, and I willingly make you the medium of apology to many, who have honoured me more than I deserve.

I admit that my retrenchments have been numerous, and leave gaps in the story, which, in your original manuscript, would have run well-nigh to a fourth volume, as my printer assures me. I am sensible, besides, that, in consequence of the liberty of curtailment you have allowed me, some parts of the story have been huddled up without the necessary details. But, after all, it is better that the travellers should have to step over a ditch, than to wade through a morass—that the reader should have to suppose what may easily be inferred, than be obliged to creep through pages of full explanation. I have struck out, for example, the whole machinery of the White Lady, and the poetry by which it is so ably supported, in the original manuscript. But you must allow that the public taste gives little encouragement to those legendary superstitions, which formed alternately the delight and the terror of our predecessors. In like manner, much is omitted illustrative of the impulse of enthusiasm in favour of the ancient religion in Mother Magdalen and the Abbot. But we do not feel deep sympathy at this period with what was once the most powerful and animating principle in Europe, with the exception of that of the Reformation, by which it was successfully opposed.

You rightly observe, that these retrenchments have rendered the title no longer applicable to the subject, and that some other would have been more suitable to the Work, in its present state, than that of THE ABBOT, who made so much greater figure in the original, and for whom your friend, the Benedictine, seems to have inspired you with a sympathetic respect. I must plead guilty to this accusation, observing, at the same time, in manner of extenuation, that though the objection might have been easily removed, by giving a new title to the Work, yet, in doing so, I should have destroyed the necessary cohesion between the present history, and its predecessor THE MONASTERY, which I was unwilling to do, as the period, and several of the personages, were the same.

After all, my good friend, it is of little consequence what the work is called, or on what interest it stands, provided it catches the public attention; for the quality of the wine (could we but ensure it) may, according to the old proverb, render the bush unnecessary, or of little consequence.

I congratulate you upon your having found it consistent with prudence to establish your Tilbury, and approve of the colour, and of your boy's livery, (subdued green and pink.)—As you talk of completing your descriptive poem on the "Ruins of Kennagahair, with notes by an Antiquary," I hope you have procured a steady horse. I remain, with compliments to all friends, dear Captain, very much

Yours, &c. &c. &c.

THE AUTHOR OF WAVERLEY.

The Abbot.

CHAPTER I.

Domum manet — locum fecit.
Ancient Roman Epitaph.
She kept close the house, and birt at the quibels.
GAWAIN DOUGLAS.

THE time which passes over our heads so imperceptibly, makes the same gradual change in habits, manners, and character, as in personal appearance. At the revolution of every five years we find ourselves another, and yet the same—there is a change of views, and no less of the light in which we regard them; a change of motives as well as of actions. Nearly twice that space had glided away over the head of Halbert Glendinning and his lady, betwixt the period of our former narrative, in which they played a distinguished part, and the date at which our present tale commences.

Two circumstances only had imblistered their union, which was otherwise as happy as mutual affection could render it. The first of these was indeed the common calamity of Scotland, being the distracted state of that unhappy country, where every man's sword was directed against his neighbour's bosom. Glendinning had proved what Murray expected of him, a steady friend, strong in battle, and wise in counsel, adhering to him, from motives of gratitude, in situations where by his own unbiassed will he would either have stood neuter, or have joined the opposite party. Hence, when danger was near—and it was seldom far distant—Sir Halbert Glendinning, for he now bore the rank of knighthood, was perpetually summoned to attend his patron on distant expeditions, or on perilous enterprises, or to assist him with his counsel in the doubtful intrigues of a half-barbarous court. He was thus frequently, and for a long space, absent from his castle and from his lady; and to this ground of regret we must add that their union had not been blessed with children, to occupy the attention of the Lady of Avenel, while she was thus deprived of her husband's domestic society.

On such occasions she lived almost entirely secluded from the world, within the walls of her paternal mansion. Visiting amongst neighbours was a matter entirely out of the question, unless on occasions of solemn festival, and then it was chiefly confined to near kindred. Of these the Lady of Avenel had none who survived, and the dames of the neighbouring barons affected to regard her less as the heiress of the House of Avenel, than as the wife of a peasant, the son of a church-vassal, raised up to mushroom eminence by the capricious favour of Murray.

The pride of ancestry, which rankled in the bosom of the ancient gentry, was more openly expressed by their ladies, and was, moreover, imbibed not a little by the political feuds of the time, for most of the Southron chiefs were friends to the authority of the Queen, and very jealous of the power of Murray. The Castle of Avenel was, therefore, on all these accounts, as melancholy and solitary a residence for its lady as could well be imagined. Still it had the essential recommendation of great security. The reader is already aware that the fortress was built upon an islet on a small lake, and was only accessible by a causeway, intersected by a double ditch, defended by two draw-bridges, so that without artillery, it might in those days be considered as impregnable. It was only necessary, therefore, to secure against surprise, and the service of six able men within the castle was sufficient for that purpose. If more serious danger threatened, an ample garrison was supplied by the male inhabitants of a little hamlet, which, under the auspices of Halbert Glendinning, had arisen on a small piece of level ground, betwixt the lake and the hill, nearly adjoining to the spot where the causeway joined the mainland. The Lord of Avenel had found it an easy matter to procure inhabitants, as he was not only a kind and beneficent overlord, but well qualified, both by his experience in arms, his high character for wisdom and integrity, and his favour with the powerful Earl of Murray, to protect and defend those who dwelt under his banner. In leaving his castle for any length of time, he had, therefore, the consolation to reflect, that this village afforded, on the slightest notice, a band of thirty stout men, which was more than sufficient for its defence; while the families of the villagers, as was usual on such occasions, fled to the recesses of the mountains, drove their cattle to the same places of shelter, and left the enemy to work their will on their miserable cottages.

The guest only resided generally, if not constantly, at the Castle of Avenel. This was Henry Warden, who now felt himself less able for the stormy task imposed on the reforming clergy; and having by his zeal given personal offence to many of the leading nobles and chiefs, did not consider himself as perfectly safe, unless when within the walls of the strong mansion of some assured friend. He ceased not, however, to serve his cause as eagerly with his pen, as he had formerly done with his tongue, and had engaged in a furious and egotistical contest, concerning the sacrifice of the mass, as it was termed, with the Abbot Eustatius, formerly the Sub-Prior of Kennaquhair. Answer,

replies, duplies, triplices, quadruplices, followed thick upon each other, and displayed, as is not unusual in controversy, fully as much zeal as Christian charity. The disputation very soon became as celebrated as that of John Knox and the Abbot of Crowaguel, raged nearly as fiercely, and, for aught I know, the publications to which it gave rise may be as precious in the eyes of bibliographers.¹ But the engrossing nature of his occupation rendered the theologian not the most interesting companion for a solitary female; and his grave, stern, and absorbed deportment, which seldom shewed any interest except in that which concerned his religious profession, made his presence rather add to than diminish the gloom which hung over the Castle of Avenel. To superintend the tasks of numerous female domestics, was the principal part of the Lady's daily employment; her spindle and distaff, her Bible, and a solitary walk upon the battlements of the castle, or upon the causeway, or occasionally, but more seldom, upon the banks of the little lake, consumed the rest of the day. But so great was the insecurity of the period, that when she ventured to extend her walk beyond the hamlet, the warder on the watch-tower was directed to keep a sharp look-out in every direction, and four or five men held themselves in readiness to mount and sally forth from the castle on the slightest appearance of alarm.

Thus stood affairs at the castle, when, after an absence of several weeks, the Knight of Avenel, which was now the title most frequently given to Sir Halbert Glendinning, was daily expected to return home. Day after day, however, passed away, and he returned not. Letters in those days were rarely written, and the Knight must have resorted to a secretary to express his intentions in that manner; besides, intercourse of all kinds was precarious and unsafe, and no man cared to give any public intimation of the time and direction of a journey, since, if his route were publicly known, it was always likely he might in that case meet with more enemies than friends upon the road. The precise day, therefore, of Sir Halbert's return was not fixed, but that which his lady's fond expectation had calculated upon in her own mind had long since passed, and hope delayed began to make the heart sick.

It was upon the evening of a sultry summer's day, when the sun was half-sunk behind the distant western mountains of Liddesdale, that the Lady took her solitary walk on the battlements of a range of buildings, which formed the front of the castle, where a flat roof of flag-stones presented a broad and convenient promenade. The level surface of the lake, undisturbed except by the occasional dipping of a teal-duck, or coot, was gilded with the beams of the setting luminary, and reflected, as if in a golden mirror, the hills amongst which it lay embosomed. The scene, otherwise so lonely, was occasionally enlivened by the voices of the children in the village, which, softened by distance, reached the ear of the Lady, in her solitary walk, or by the distant call of the herdsman, as he guided his cattle from the glen in which they had pastured all day, to place them in greater security for the night, in

the immediate vicinity of the village. The deep lowing of the cows seemed to demand the attendance of the milk-maidens, who, singing shrilly and merrily, strolled forth, each with her pail on her head, to attend to the duty of the evening. The Lady of Avenel looked and listened; the sounds which she heard reminded her of former days, when her most important employment, as well as her greatest delight, was to assist Dame Glendinning and Tibb Tacket in milking the cows at Glendearg. The thought was fraught with melancholy.

"Why was I not," she said, "the peasant girl which in all men's eyes I seemed to be! Halbert and I had then spent our life peacefully in his native glen, undisturbed by the phantoms either of fear or of ambition. His greatest pride had then been to shew the fairest herd in the Hallidome; his greatest danger to repel some pilfering snatcher from the Border; and the utmost distance which would have divided us, would have been the chase of some outlying deer. But, alas! what avails the blood which Halbert has shed, and the dangers which he encounters, to support a name and rank, dear to him because he has it from me, but which we shall never transmit to our posterity! with me the name of Avenel must expire."

She sighed as these reflections arose, and, looking towards the shore of the lake, her eye was attracted by a group of children of various ages, assembled to see a little ship, constructed by some village artist, perform its first voyage on the water. It was launched amid the shouts of tiny voices and the clapping of little hands, and shot bravely forth on its voyage with a favouring wind, which promised to carry it to the other side of the lake. Some of the bigger boys ran round to receive and secure it on the farther shore, trying their speed against each other as they sprang like young fawns along the shingly verge of the lake. The rest, for whom such a journey seemed too arduous, remained watching the motions of the fairy vessel from the spot where it had been launched. The sight of their sports pressed on the mind of the childless Lady of Avenel.

"Why are none of these prattlers mine?" she continued, pursuing the tenor of her melancholy reflections. "Their parents can scarce find them the coarsest food—and I, who could nurse them in plenty, I am doomed never to hear a child call me mother!"

The thought sunk on her heart with a bitterness which resembled envy, so deeply is the desire of offspring implanted in the female breast. She pressed her hands together as if she were wringing them in the extremity of her desolate feeling, as one whom Heaven had written childless. A large stag-hound of the greyhound species approached at this moment, and, attracted perhaps by the gesture, licked her hand, and pressed his large head against them. He obtained the desired caress in return, but still the sad impression remained.

"Wolf," she said, as if the animal could have understood her complaints, "thou art a noble and beautiful animal; but, alas! the love and affection that I long to bestow, is of a quality higher than can fall to thy share, though I love thee much."

And, as if she were apologizing to Wolf for withholding from him any part of her regard, she caressed his proud head and crest, while, looking

¹ The tracts which appeared in the Disputation between the Scottish Reformer and Quentin Kennedy, Abbot of Crowaguel, are among the rarest in Scottish Bibliography. See *M'Crie's Life of Knox*, p. 232.

in her eyes, he seemed to ask her what she wanted, or what he could do to shew his attachment. At this moment a shriek of distress was heard on the shore, from the playful group which had been lately so jovial. The Lady looked, and saw the cause with great agony.

The little ship, the object of the children's delighted attention, had stuck among some tufts of the plant which bears the water-lily, that marked a shoal in the lake about an arrow-flight from the shore. A hardy little boy, who had taken the lead in the race round the margin of the lake, did not hesitate a moment to strip off his wylie-coat, plunge into the water, and swim towards the object of their common solicitude. The first movement of the Lady was to call for help; but she observed that the boy swam strongly and fearlessly, and as she saw that one or two villagers, who were distant spectators of the incident, seemed, to give themselves no uneasiness on his account, she supposed that he was accustomed to the exercise, and that there was no danger. But whether, in swimming, the boy had struck his breast against a sunken rock, or whether he was suddenly taken with cramp, or whether he had over-calculated his own strength, it so happened, that when he had disencumbered the little plaything from the flags in which it was entangled, and sent it forward on its course, he had scarce swam a few yards in his way to the shore, than he raised himself suddenly from the water, and screamed aloud, clapping his hands at the same time with an expression of fear and pain.

The Lady of Avenel, instantly taking the alarm, called hastily to the attendants to get the boat ready. But this was an affair of some time. The only boat permitted to be used on the lake, was moored within the second cut which intersected the canal, and it was several minutes ere it could be unmoored and got under way. Meantime, the Lady of Avenel, with agonizing anxiety, saw that the efforts that the poor boy made to keep himself afloat, were now exchanged for a faint struggling, which would soon have been over, but for aid equally prompt and unhopd for. Wolf, who, like some of that large species of greyhound, was a practised water-dog, had marked the object of her anxiety, and, quitting his mistress's side, had sought the nearest point from which he could with safety plunge into the lake. With the wonderful instinct which these noble animals have so often displayed in the like circumstances, he swam straight to the spot where his assistance was so much wanted, and seizing the child's under-dress in his mouth, he not only kept him afloat, but towed him towards the causeway. The boat having put off with a couple of men, met the dog half-way, and relieved him of his burden. They landed on the causeway, close by the gate of the castle, with their yet lifeless charge, and were there met by the Lady of Avenel, attended by one or two of her maidens, eagerly waiting to administer assistance to the sufferer.

He was borne into the castle, deposited upon a bed, and every mode of recovery resorted to, which the knowledge of the times, and the skill of Henry Warden, who professed some medical science, could dictate. For some time it was all in vain, and the Lady watched, with unspeakable earnestness, the pallid countenance of the beautiful child. He seemed about ten years old. His dress was of the meanest sort, but his long curled hair, and the

noble cast of his features, partook not of that poverty of appearance. The proudest noble in Scotland might have been yet prouder could he have called that child his heir. While, with breathless anxiety, the Lady of Avenel gazed on his well-formed and expressive features, a slight shade of colour returned gradually to the cheek; suspended animation became restored by degrees, the child sighed deeply, opened his eyes, which to the human countenance produces the effect of light upon the natural landscape, stretched his arms towards the Lady, and muttered the word "Mother," that epithet, of all others, which is dearest to the female ear.

"God, madam," said the preacher, "has restored the child to your wishes; it must be yours so to bring him up, that he may not one day wish that he had perished in his innocence."

"It shall be my charge," said the Lady; and again throwing her arms around the boy, she overwhelmed him with kisses and caresses, so much was she agitated by the terror arising from the danger in which he had been just placed, and by joy at his unexpected deliverance.

"But you are not my mother," said the boy, recovering his recollection, and endeavouring, though faintly, to escape from the caresses of the Lady of Avenel; "you are not my mother."—alas! I have no mother—only I have dreamt that I had one."

"I will read the dream for you, my love," answered the Lady of Avenel; "and I will be myself your mother. Surely God has heard my wishes, and, in his own marvellous manner, hath sent me an object on which my affections may expand themselves." She looked towards Warden as she spoke. The preacher hesitated what he should reply to a burst of passionate feeling, which, perhaps, seemed to him more enthusiastic than the occasion demanded. In the meanwhile, the large stag-hound, Wolf, which, dripping wet as he was, had followed his mistress into the apartment, and had sat by the bedside, a patient and quiet spectator of all the means used for resuscitation of the being whom he had preserved, now became impatient of remaining any longer unnoticed, and began to whine and fawn upon the Lady with his great rough paws.

"Yes," she said, "good Wolf, and you shall be remembered also for your day's work; and I will think the more of you for having preserved the life of a creature so beautiful."

But Wolf was not quite satisfied with the share of attention which he thus attracted; he persisted in whining and pawing upon his mistress, his caresses rendered still more troublesome by his long shaggy hair being so much and thoroughly wetted, till she desired one of the domestics, with whom he was familiar, to call the animal out of the apartment. Wolf resisted every invitation to this purpose, until his mistress positively commanded him to be gone, in an angry tone; when, turning towards the bed on which the boy still lay, half awake to sensation, half drowned in the meanders of fluctuating delirium, he uttered a deep and savage growl, curled up his nose and lips, shewing his full range of white and sharpened teeth, which might have matched those of an actual wolf, and then, turning round, sullenly followed the domestic out of the apartment.

"It is singular," said the Lady, addressing Warden; "the animal is not only so good-natured to all, but so particularly fond of children. What can ail him at the little fellow whose life he has saved?"

"Dogs," replied the preacher, "are but too like the human race in their foibles, though their instinct be less erring than the reason of poor mortal man when relying upon his own unassisted powers. Jealousy, my good lady, is a passion not unknown to them, and they often evince it, not only with respect to the preferences which they see given by their masters to individuals of their own species, but even when their rivals are children. You have caressed that child much and eagerly, and the dog considers himself as a discarded favourite."

"It is a strange instinct," said the Lady; "and from the gravity with which you mention it, my reverend friend, I would almost say that you supposed this singular jealousy of my favourite Wolf, was not only well founded, but justifiable. But perhaps you speak in jest?"

"I seldom jest," answered the preacher; "life was not lent to us to be expended in that idle mirth which resembles the crackling of thorns under the pot. I would only have you derive, if it so please you, this lesson from what I have said, that the best of our feelings, when indulged to excess, may give pain to others. There is but one in which we may indulge to the utmost limit of vehemence of which our bosom is capable, secure that excess cannot exist in the greatest intensity to which it can be excited — I mean the love of our Maker."

"Surely," said the Lady of Avenel, "we are commanded by the same authority to love our neighbour?"

"Ay, madam," said Warden, "but our love to God is to be unbounded — we are to love him with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole strength. The love which the precept commands us to bear to our neighbour, has affixed to it a direct limit and qualification — we are to love our neighbour as ourself; as it is elsewhere explained by the great commandment, that we must do unto him as we would that he should do unto us. Here there is a limit, and a bound, even to the most praiseworthy of our affections, so far as they are turned upon sublunary and terrestrial objects. We are to render to our neighbour, whatever be his rank or degree, that corresponding portion of affection with which we could rationally expect we should ourselves be regarded by those standing in the same relation to us. Hence, neither husband nor wife, neither son nor daughter, neither friend nor relation, are lawfully to be made the objects of our idolatry. The Lord our God is a jealous God and will not endure that we bestow on the creature that extremity of devotion which He who made us demands as his own share. I say to you, Lady, that even in the fairest, and purest, and most honourable feelings of our nature, there is that original taint of sin which ought to make us pause and hesitate, ere we indulge them to excess."

"I understand not this, reverend sir," said the Lady; "nor do I guess what I can have now said or done, to draw down on me an admonition which has something a taste of reproof."

"Lady," said Warden, "I crave your pardon, if I have urged aught beyond the limits of my duty.

But consider, whether in the sacred promise to be not only a protectress, but a mother, to this poor child, your purpose may meet the wishes of the noble knight your husband. The fondness which you have lavished on the unfortunate, and, I own, most lovely child, has met something like a reproof in the bearing of your household dog. — Displease not your noble husband. Men, as well as animals, are jealous of the affections of those they love."

"This is too much, reverend sir," said the Lady of Avenel, greatly offended. "You have been long our guest, and have received from the Knight of Avenel and myself that honour and regard which your character and profession so justly demand. But I am yet to learn that we have at any time authorized your interference in our family arrangements, or placed you as a judge of our conduct towards each other. I pray this may be forborne in future."

"Lady," replied the preacher, with the boldness peculiar to the clergy of his persuasion at that time, "when you weary of my admonitions — when I see that my services are no longer acceptable to you, and the noble knight your husband, I shall know that my Master wills me no longer to abide here; and, praying for a continuance of his best blessings on your family, I will then, were the season the depth of winter, and the hour midnight, walk out on yonder waste, and travel forth through these wild mountains, as lonely and unaided, though far more helpless, than when I first met your husband in the valley of Glendearg. But while I remain here, I will not see you err from the true path, no, not a hair's-breadth, without making the old man's voice and remonstrance heard."

"Nay, but," said the Lady, who both loved and respected the good man, though sometimes a little offended at what she conceived to be an exuberant degree of zeal, "we will not part this way, my good friend. Women are quick and hasty in their feelings; but, believe me, my wishes and my purposes towards this child are such as both my husband and you will approve of." The clergyman bowed, and retreated to his own apartment.

CHAPTER II.

How steadfastly he fix'd his eyes on me —
His dark eyes shining through forgotten tears —
Then stretch'd his little arms, and call'd me mother!
What could I do? I took the bunting home —
I could not tell the imp he had no mother.

Count Basil.

WHEN Warden had left the apartment, the Lady of Avenel gave way to the feelings of tenderness which the sight of the boy, his sudden danger, and his recent escape, had inspired; and no longer awed by the sternness, as she deemed it, of the preacher, heaped with caresses the lovely and interesting child. He was now, in some measure, recovered from the consequences of his accident, and received passively, though not without wonder, the tokens of kindness with which he was thus loaded. The face of the lady was strange to him, and her dress different and far more sumptuous than any he remembered. But the boy was naturally of an undaunted temper; and indeed children are generally acute physiognomists, and

not only pleased by that which is beautiful in itself, but peculiarly quick in distinguishing and replying to the attentions of those who really love them. If they see a person in company, though a perfect stranger, who is by nature fond of children, the little impa seem to discover it by a sort of freemasonry, while the awkward attempts of those who make advances to them for the purpose of recommending themselves to the parents, usually fail in attracting their reciprocal attention. The little boy, therefore, appeared in some degree sensible of the lady's caresses, and it was with difficulty she withdrew herself from his pillow, to afford him leisure for necessary repose.

"To whom belongs our little rescued varlet?" was the first question which the Lady of Avenel put to her handmaiden Lillias, when they had retired to the hall.

"To an old woman in the hamlet," said Lillias, "who is even now come so far as the porter's lodge to inquire concerning his safety. Is it your pleasure that she be admitted?"

"Is it my pleasure?" said the Lady of Avenel, echoing the question with a strong accent of displeasure and surprise; "can you make any doubt of it? What woman but must pity the agony of the mother, whose heart is throbbing for the safety of a child so lovely?"

"Nay, but, madam," said Lillias, "this woman is too old to be the mother of the child; I rather think she must be his grandmother, or some more distant relation."

"Be she who she will, Lillias," replied the lady, "she must have an aching heart while no safety of a creature so lovely is uncertain. Go instantly and bring her hither. Besides, I would willingly learn something concerning his birth."

Lillias left the hall, and presently afterwards returned, ushering in a tall female very poorly dressed, yet with more pretension to decency and cleanliness than was usually combined with such coarse garments. The Lady of Avenel knew her figure the instant she presented herself. It was the fashion of the family, that upon every Sabbath, and on two evenings in the week besides, Henry Warden preached or lectured in the chapel at the castle. The extension of the Protestant faith was, upon principle, as well as in good policy, a primary object with the Knight of Avenel. The inhabitants of the village were therefore invited to attend upon the instructions of Henry Warden, and many of them were speedily won to the doctrine which their master and protector approved. These sermons, homilies, and lectures, had made a great impression on the mind of the Abbot Eustace, or Eustatius, and were a sufficient spur to the severity and sharpness of his controversy with his old fellow-collegiate; and, ere Queen Mary was dethroned, and while the Catholics still had considerable authority in the Border provinces, he more than once threatened to levy his assaults, and assail and level with the earth that stronghold of heresy the Castle of Avenel. But notwithstanding the Abbot's impatient resentment, and notwithstanding also the disinclination of the country to favour the new religion, Henry Warden proceeded without remission in his labours, and made weekly converts from the faith of Rome to that of the reformed church. Amongst those who gave most earnest and constant attendance on his ministry, was the aged

woman, whose form, tall, and otherwise too remarkable to be forgotten, the Lady had of late observed frequently as being conspicuous amongst the little audience. She had indeed more than once desired to know who that stately-looking woman was, whose appearance was so much above the poverty of her vestments. But the reply had always been, that she was an Englishwoman, who was tarrying for a season at the hamlet, and that no one knew more concerning her. She now asked her after her name and birth.

"Magdalen Grame is my name," said the woman; "I come of the Grames of Heathergill, in Nicol-forest, a people of ancient blood."

"And what make you," continued the Lady, "so far distant from your home?"

"I have no home," said Magdalen Grame, "it was burnt by your Border-riders—my husband and my son were slain—there is not a drop's blood left in the veins of any one which is of kin to mine."

"That is no uncommon fate in these wild times, and in this unsettled land," said the Lady; "the English hands have been as deeply dyed in our blood as ever those of Scotsmen have been in yours."

"You have right to say it, Lady," answered Magdalen Grame; "for men tell of a time when this castle was not strong enough to save your father's life, or to afford your mother and her infant a place of refuge. And why ask ye me, then, wherefore I dwell not in mine own home, and with mine own people?"

"It was indeed an idle contention," answered the Lady, "where misery so often makes wanderers; but wherefore take refuge in a hostile country?"

"My neighbours were Popish and mass-mongers," said the old woman; "it has pleased Heaven to give me a clearer sight of the gospel, and I have tarried here to enjoy the ministry of that worthy man Henry Warden, who, to the praise and comfort of many, teacheth the Evangel in truth and in sincerity."

"Are you poor?" again demanded the Lady of Avenel.

"You hear me ask alms of no one," answered the Englishwoman.

Here there was a pause. The manner of the woman was, if not disrespectful, at least much less than gracious; and she appeared to give no encouragement to farther communication. The Lady of Avenel renewed the conversation on a different topic.

"You have heard of the danger in which your boy has been placed?"

"I have, Lady, and how by an especial providence he was rescued from death. May Heaven make him thankful, and me!"

"What relation do you bear to him?"

"I am his grandmother, Lady, if it so please you; the only relation he hath left upon earth to take charge of him."

"The burden of his maintenance must necessarily be grievous to you in your deserted situation?" pursued the Lady.

"I have complained of it to no one," said Magdalen Grame, with the same unmoved, dry, and unconcerned tone of voice, in which she had answered all the former questions.

¹ A district of Cumberland, lying close to the Scottish Border.

"If," said the Lady of Avenel, "your grandchild could be received into a noble family, would it not advantage both him and you?"

"Received into a noble family!" said the old woman, drawing herself up, and bending her brows until her forehead was wrinkled into a frown of unusual severity; "and for what purpose, I pray you!—to be my lady's page, or my lord's jacksman, to eat broken victuals, and contend with other menials for the remnants of the master's meal! Would you have him to fan the flies from my lady's face while she sleeps, to carry her train while she walks, to hand her trencher when she sits, to ride before her on horseback, to walk after her on foot, to sing when she lists, and to be silent when she bids!—a very weatherecock, which, though furnished in appearance with wings and plumage, cannot soar into the air—cannot fly from the spot where it is perched, but receives all its impulses, and performs all its revolutions, obedient to the clangful breath of a vain woman! When the eagle of Helvolyn perches on the tower of Lancaster, and turns and changes his place to shew how the wind sits, Roland Grieme shall be what you would make him."

The woman spoke with a rapidity and vehemence which seemed to have in it a touch of insanity; and a sudden sense of the danger to which the child must necessarily be exposed in the charge of such a keeper, increased the Lady's desire to keep him in the castle if possible.

"You mistake me, dame," she said, addressing the old woman in a soothing manner; "I do not wish your boy to be in attendance on myself, but upon the good knight, my husband. Were he himself the son of a belted earl, he could not better be trained to arms, and all that befits a gentleman, than by the instructions and discipline of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"Ay," answered the old woman, in the same style of bitter irony, "I know the wages of that service;—a curse when the corselet is not sufficiently brightened,—a blow when the girdle is not tightly drawn,—to be beaten because the bounds are at fault,—to be reviled because the foray is unsuccessful,—to stain his hands for the master's bidding in the blood alike of beast and of man,—to be a butcher of harmless deer, a murderer and defacer of God's own image, not at his own pleasure, but at that of his lord,—to live a brawling ruffian, and a common stabber,—exposed to heat, to cold, to want of food, to all the privations of an anchorite, not for the love of God, but for the service of Satan,—to die by the gibbet, or in some obscure skiffish, —to sleep out his brief life in carnal security, and to awake in the eternal fire, which is never quenched."

"Nay," said the Lady of Avenel, "but if such unalloyed course of life your grandson will not be here exposed. My husband is just and kind to those who live under his banner; and you yourself well know, that youth have here a strict as well as a good preceptor in the person of our chaplain."

The old woman appeared to pause.

"You have named," she said, "the only circumstance which can move me. I must soon onward, the vision has said it—I must not tarry in the same spot—I must on—I must on, it is my weird.—Swear, then, that you will protect the boy as if he were your own, until I return hither and claim

him, and I will consent for a space to part with him. But especially swear, he shall not lack the instruction of the godly man who hath placed the gospel-truth high above those idolatrous shavelings, the monks and friars."

"Be satisfied, dame," said the Lady of Avenel, "the boy shall have as much care as if he were born of my own blood. Will you see him now?"

"No," answered the old woman, sternly; "to part is enough. I go forth on my own mission. I will not soften my heart by useless tears and wailings, as one that is not called to a duty."

"Will you not accept of something to aid you in your pilgrimage?" said the Lady of Avenel, putting into her hands two crowns of the sun. The old woman flung them down on the table.

"Am I of the race of Cain," she said, "proud Lady, that you offer me gold in exchange for my own flesh and blood?"

"I had no such meaning," said the Lady, gently; "nor am I the proud woman you term me. Alas! my own fortunes might have taught me humility, even had it not been born with me."

The old woman seemed somewhat to relax her tone of severity.

"You are of gentle blood," she said, "else we had not parleyed thus long together.—You are of gentle blood, and to such," she added, drawing up her tall form as she spoke, "pride is as graceful as is the plume upon the bonnet. But for these pieces of gold, lady, you must needs resume them. I need not money. I am well provided; and I may not care for myself, nor think how, or by whom I shall be sustained. Farewell, and keep your word. Cause your gates to be opened, and your bridges to be lowered. I will set forward this very night. When I come again, I will demand from you a strict account for I have left with you the jewel of my life! Sleep will visit me but in snatches, food will not refresh me, rest will not restore my strength, until I see Roland Graeme. Once more, farewell."

"Make your obeisance, dame," said Lillias to Magdalen Graeme, as she retired, "make your obeisance to her ladyship, and thank her for her goodness, as is but fitting and right."

The old woman turned short around on the officious waiting-maid. "Let her make her obeisance to me then, and I will return it. Why should I bend to her?—is it because her kirtle is of silk, and mine of blue looking-glass?—Go to, my lady's waiting-woman. Know that the rank of the man rises that of the wife, and that she who marries a churl's son were she a king's daughter, is but a peasant's bride."

Lillias was about to reply in great indignation, but her mistress imposed silence on her, and commanded that the old woman should be safely conducted to the mainland.

"Conduct her safe!" exclaimed the incensed waiting-woman, while Magdalen Graeme left the apartment; "I say, duck her in the loch, and then we will see whether she is witch or not, as every body in the village of Lochside will say and swear. I marvel your ladyship could bear so long with her insolence." But the commands of the Lady were obeyed, and the old dame, dismissed from the castle, was committed to her fortune. She kept her word, and did not long abide in that place, leaving the hamlet on the very night succeeding the interview, and wandering no one asked whither. The Lady

of Avenel inquired under what circumstances she had appeared among them, but could only learn that she was believed to be the widow of some man of consequence among the Græmes who then inhabited the Debateable Land, a name given to a certain portion of territory which was the frequent subject of dispute betwixt Scotland and England—that she had suffered great wrong in some of the frequent forays by which that unfortunate district was wasted, and had been driven from her dwelling-place. She had arrived in the hamlet no one knew for what purpose, and was held by some to be a witch, by others a zealous Protestant, and by others again a Catholic devotee. Her language was mysterious, and her manners repulsive; and all that could be collected from her conversation seemed to imply that she was under the influence either of a spell or of a vow,—there was no saying which, since she talked as one who acted under a powerful and external agency.

Such were the particulars which the Lady's inquiries were able to collect concerning Magdalen Græme, being far too meagre and contradictory to authorize any satisfactory deduction. In truth, the miseries of the time, and the various turns of fate incidental to a frontier country, were perpetually chasing from their habitations those who had not the means of defence or protection. These wanderers in the land were too often seen, to excite much attention or sympathy. They received the cold relief which was extorted by general feelings of humanity; a little excited in some breasts, and perhaps rather chilled in others, by the recollection that they who gave the charity to-day might themselves want it to-morrow. Magdalen Græme, therefore, came and departed like a shadow from the neighbourhood of Avenel Castle.

The boy whom Providence, as she thought, had thus strangely placed under her care, was at once established a favourite with the Lady of the castle. How could it be otherwise! He became the object of those affectionate feelings, which, finding formerly no object on which to expand themselves, had increased the gloom of the castle, and imbibed the solitude of its mistress. To teach him reading and writing as far as her skill went, to attend to his childish comforts, to watch his boyish sports, became the Lady's favourite amusement. In her circumstances, where she ear only heard the lowing of the cattle from the distant hills, or the heavy step of the warder as he walked upon his post, or the half-envied laugh of her maiden as she turned her wheel, the appearance of the blooming, and beautiful boy gave an interest which can hardly be conceived by those who live amid gayer or busier scenes. Young Roland was to the Lady of Avenel what the flower, which occupies the window of some solitary captive, is to the poor wight by whom it is nursed and cultivated,—something which at once excited and repaid her care; and in giving the boy her affection, she felt, as it were, grateful to him for releasing her from the state of dull apathy in which she had usually found herself during the absence of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

But even the charms of this blooming favourite were unable to chase the recurring apprehensions which arose from her husband's procrastinated return. Soon after Roland Græme became a resident at the castle, a groom, despatched by Sir Halbert, brought tidings that business still delayed

the Knight at the Court of Holyrood. The more distant period which the messenger had assigned for his master's arrival at length glided away, summer melted into autumn, and autumn was about to give place to winter, and yet he came not.

CHAPTER III.

The waning harvest-moon shone broad and bright.
The warder's horn was heard at dead of night,
And while the portals wide were flung,
With trampling hoofs the rocky pavement rung.
LEYDEN.

"And you, too, would be a soldier, Roland!" said the Lady of Avenel to her young charge, while, seated on a stone chair at one end of the battlements, she saw the boy attempt, with a long stick, to mimic the motions of the warder, as he alternately shouldered, or ported, or sloped pike.

"Yes, lady," said the boy,—for he was now familiar, and replied to her questions with readiness and alacrity,—“a soldier will I be; for there ne'er was gentleman but who belted him with the brand.”

"Thou a gentleman!" said Lillias, who, as usual, was in attendance; “such a gentleman as I would make of a bean-cod with a rusty knife.”

"Nay, chide him not, Lillias," said the Lady of Avenel, “for, beshrew me, but I think he comes of gentle blood—see how it musters in his face at your injurious reproach.”

"Had I my will, madam," answered Lillias, “a good birchen wand should make his colour muster to better purpose still.”

"On my word, Lillias," said the Lady, “you would think you had received harm from the poor boy—or is he so far on the frosty side of your favour because he enjoys the sunny side of mine?”

"Over heavens forbode, my Lady!" answered Lillias; “I have lived too long with gentles, I praise my stars for it, to fight with either follies or fantasies, whether they relate to beast, bird, or boy.”

Lillias was a favourite in her own class, a spoiled domestic, and often accustomed to take more license than her mistress was at all times willing to encourage. But what did not please the Lady of Avenel, she did not choose to hear, and thus it was on the present occasion. She resolved to look more close and sharply after the boy, who had hitherto been committed chiefly to the management of Lillias. He must, she thought, be born of gentle blood; it were shame to think otherwise of a form so noble, and features so fair;—the very wildness in which he occasionally indulged, his contempt of danger, and impatience of restraint, had in them something noble;—assuredly the child was born of high rank. Such was her conclusion, and she acted upon it accordingly. The domestics around her, less jealous, or less scrupulous than Lillias, acted as servants usually do, following the bias, and flattering, for their own purposes, the humour of the Lady; and the boy soon took on him those airs of superiority, which the sight of habitual deference seldom fails to inspire. It seemed, in truth, as if to command were his natural sphere, so easily did he use himself so exact and receive compliance with his humours. The chaplain, indeed, might have interposed to check the air of assumption which Roland Græme so

usually indulged, and must probably would have willingly rendered him that favour; but the necessity of adjusting with his brethren some disputed points of church discipline had withdrawn him for some time from the castle, and detained him in a distant part of the kingdom.

Matters stood thus in the castle of Avenel, when a winded bugle sent its shrill and prolonged notes from the shore of the lake, and was replied to cheerily by the signal of the warder. The Lady of Avenel knew the sounds of her husband, and rushed to the window of the apartment in which she was sitting. A band of about thirty spearmen, with a pennon displayed before them, winded along the indented shores of the lake, and approached the causeway. A single horseman rode at the head of the party, his bright arms catching a glance of the October sun as he moved steadily along. Even at that distance, the Lady recognized the lofty plume, bearing the mingled colours of her own liveries and those of Glendonwyne, blended with the holly-branch; and the firm seat and dignified demeanour of the rider, joined to the stately motion of the dark-brown steed, sufficiently announced Halbert Glendinning.

The Lady's first thought was that of rapturous joy at her husband's return—her second was connected with a fear which had sometimes intruded itself, that he might not altogether approve the peculiar distinction with which she had treated her orphan ward. In this fear there was implied a consciousness, that the favour she had shewn him was excessive; for Halbert Glendinning was at least as gentle and indulgent, as he was firm and rational in the intercourse of his household; and to her in particular, his conduct had ever been most affectionately tender.

Yet she did fear, that, on the present occasion, her conduct might incur Sir Halbert's censure; and hastily resolving that she would not mention the anecdote of the boy until the next day, she ordered him to be withdrawn from the apartment by Lillias.

"I will not go with Lillias, madam," answered the spoiled child, who had more than once carried his point by perseverance, and who, like his betters, delighted in the exercise of such authority.—"I will not go to Lillias' gousty room—I will stay and see that brave warrior who comes riding so gallantly along the drawbridge."

"You must not stay, Roland," said the Lady, more positively than she usually spoke to her little favourite.

"I will," reiterated the boy, who had already felt his consequence, and the probable chance of success.

"You will, Roland!" answered the Lady, "what manner of word is that? I tell you, you must go."

"I will," answered the forward boy, "is a word for a man, and must is no word for a lady."

"You are saucy, sirrah," said the Lady—"Lillias take him with you instantly."

"I always thought," said Lillias, smiling, as she seized the reluctant boy by the arm, "that my young master must give place to my old one."

"And you, too, are malapert, mistress?" said the Lady; "hath the moon changed, that ye all of you thus forget yourselves?"

Lillias made no reply, but led off the boy, who, too proud to offer unavailing resistance, darted at his benefactress a glance which intimated plain-

how willingly he would have defied her authority had he possessed the power to make good his point.

The Lady of Avenel was vexed to find how much this trifling circumstance had discomposed her, at the moment when she ought naturally to have been entirely engrossed by her husband's return. But we do not recover composure by the mere feeling that agitation is mistimed. The glow of displeasure had not left the Lady's cheek, her ruffled deportment was not yet entirely composed, when her husband, unhelmeted, but still wearing the rest of his arms, entered the apartment. His appearance banished the thoughts of every thing else; she rushed to him, clasped his iron-sheathed frame in her arms, and kissed his martial and manly face with an affection which was at once evident and sincere. The warrior returned her embrace and her caress with the same fondness; for the time which had passed since their union had diminished its romantic ardour, perhaps, but it had rather increased its rational fondness, and Sir Halbert Glendinning's long and frequent absences from his castle had prevented affection from degenerating by habit into indifference.

When the first eager greetings were paid and received, the Lady gazed fondly on her husband's face as she remarked, "You are altered, Halbert—you have ridden hard and far to-day, or you have been ill?"

"I have been well, Mary," answered the Knight, "passing well have I been; and a long ride is to me, thou well knowest, but a thing of constant custom. Those who are born noble may slumber out their lives within the walls of their castles and manor-houses; but he who hath achieved nobility by his own deeds must ever be in the saddle, to shew that he merits his advancement."

While he spoke thus, the Lady gazed fondly on him, as if endeavouring to read his inmost soul; for the tone in which he spoke was that of melancholy depression.

Sir Halbert Glendinning was the same, yet a different person from what he had appeared in his early years. The fiery freedom of the aspiring youth had given place to the steady and stern composure of the approved soldier and skilful politician. There were deep traces of care on those noble features, over which each emotion used formerly to pass, like light clouds across a summer sky. That sky was now, not perhaps clouded, but still and grave, like that of the sober autumn evening. The forehead was higher and more bare than in early youth, and the locks which still clustered thick and dark on the warrior's head, were worn away at the temples, not by age, but by the constant pressure of the steel-cap, or helmet. His beard, according to the fashion of the times, grew short and thick, and was turned into mustaches on the upper lip, and peaked at the extremity. The cheek, weather-beaten and embrowned, had lost the glow of youth, but shewed the vigorous complexion of active and confirmed manhood. Halbert Glendinning was, in a word, a knight to ride at a king's right hand, to bear his banner in war, and to be his counsellor in time of peace; for his looks expressed the considerate firmness which can resolve wisely and dare boldly. Still, over these noble features, there now spread an air of dejection, of which, perhaps, the owner was not conscious, but which did not escape

the observation of his anxious and affectionate partner.

"Something has happened, or is about to happen," said the Lady of Avenel; "this sadness sits not on your brow without cause—misfortune, national or particular, must needs be at hand."

"There is nothing new that I wot of," said Halbert Glendinning; "but there is little of evil which can befall a kingdom, that may not be apprehended in this unhappy and divided realm."

"Nay, then," said the Lady, "I see there hath really been some fatal work on foot. My Lord of Murray has not so long detained you at Holyrood, save that he wanted your help in some weighty purpose."

"I have not been at Holyrood, Mary," answered the Knight; "I have been several weeks abroad."

"Abroad! and sent me no word!" replied the Lady.

"What would the knowledge have availed, but to have rendered you unhappy, my love!" replied the Knight; "your thought would have converted the slightest breeze that curled your own lake, into a tempest raging in the German ocean."

"And have you then really crossed the sea?" said the Lady, to whom the very idea of an element which she had never seen conveyed notions of terror and of wonder,—"really left your own native land, and trodden distant shores, where the Scottish tongue is unheard and unknown?"

"Really, and really," said the Knight, taking her hand in affectionate playfulness, "I have done this marvellous deed—have rolled on the ocean for three days and three nights, with the deep green waves dashing by the side of my pillow, and but a thin plank to divide me from it."

"Indeed, my Halbert," said the Lady, "that was a tempting of Divine Providence. I never bade you unbuckle the sword from your side, or lay the lance from your hand—I never bade you sit still when your honour called you to rise and ride; but are not blade and spear dangers enough for one man's life, and why would you trust rough waves and raging seas?"

"We have in Germany, and in the Low Countries, as they are called," answered Glendinning, "men who are united with us in faith, and with whom it is fitting we should unite in alliance. To some of these I was despatched on business as important as it was secret. I went in safety, and I returned in security; there is more danger to a man's life betwixt this and Holyrood, than are in all the seas that wash the lowlands of Holland."

"And the country, my Halbert, and the people," said the Lady, "are they like our kindly Scots! or what bearing have they to strangers?"

"They are a people, Mary, strong in their wealth, which renders all other nations weak, and weak in those arts of war by which other nations are strong."

"I do not understand you," said the Lady.

"The Hollander and the Fleming, Mary, pour forth their spirit in trade, and not in war; their wealth purchases them the arms of foreign soldiers, by whose aid they defend it. They erect dikes on the sea-shore to protect the land which they have won, and they levy regiments of the stubborn Switzers and hardy Germans to protect the treasures which they have amassed. And thus they are strong in their weakness: for the very wealth

which tempts their masters to despoil them, arms strangers in their behalf."

"The slothful hinds!" exclaimed Mary, thinking and feeling like a Scotswoman of the period; "have they hands, and fight not for the land which bore them? They should be notched off at the elbow!"

"Nay, that were but hard justice," answered her husband; "for their hands serve their country, though not in battle, like ours. Look at these barren hills, Mary, and at that deep winding vale by which the cattle are even now returning from their scanty browse. The hand of the industrious Fleming would cover these mountains with woad, and raise corn where we now see a starved and scanty sward of heath and ling. It grieves me, Mary, when I look on that land, and think what benefit it might receive from such men as I have lately seen—men who seek not the idle fame derived from dead ancestors, or the bloody renown won in modern broils, but tread along the land as preservers and improvers, not as tyrants and destroyers."

"These amendments would here be but a vain fancy, my Halbert," answered the Lady of Avenel; "the trees would be burned by the English foemen, ere they ceased to be shrubs, and the grain that you raised would be gathered in by the first neighbour that possessed more riders than follow your train. Why should you repine at this? The fate that made you Scotsman by birth, gave you head, and heart, and hand, to uphold the name as it must needs be upheld."

"It gave me no name to uphold," said Halbert, pacing the floor slowly; "my arm has been foremost in every strife—my voice has been heard in every council; nor have the wisest rebuked me. The crafty Lethington, the deep and dark Morton, have held secret council with me, and Grange and Lindsay have owned, that in the field I did the devoir of a gallant knight—but let the emergence be passed when they need my head and hand, and they only know me as son of the obscure portioner of Glendearg."

This was a theme which the Lady always dreaded; for the rank conferred on her husband, the favour in which he was held by the powerful Earl of Murray, and the high talents by which he vindicated his right to that rank and that favour, were qualities which rather increased than diminished the envy which was harboured against Sir Halbert Glendinning among a proud aristocracy, as a person originally of inferior and obscure birth, who had risen to his present eminence solely by his personal merit. The natural firmness of his mind did not enable him to despise the ideal advantages of a higher pedigree, which were held in such universal esteem by all with whom he conversed; and so open are the noblest minds to jealous inconstancy, that there were moments in which he felt mortified that his lady should possess those advantages of birth and high descent which he himself did not enjoy, and regretted that his importance as the proprietor of Avenel was qualified by his possessing it only as the husband of the heiress. He was not so unjust as to permit any unworthy feelings to retain permanent possession of his mind, but yet they recurred from time to time, and did not escape his lady's anxious observation.

"Had we been blessed with children," she was wont on such occasions to say to herself, "had our blood been united in a son who might have joined

my advantages of descent with my husband's personal worth, these painful and irksome reflections had not disturbed our union even for a moment! But the existence of such an heir, in whom our affections, as well as our pretensions, might have centred, has been denied to us."

With such mutual feelings, it cannot be wondered that it gave the Lady pain to hear her husband verging towards this topic of mutual discontent. On the present, as on other similar occasions, she endeavoured to divert the knight's thoughts from this painful channel.

"How can you," she said, "suffer yourself to dwell upon things which profit nothing! Have you indeed no name to uphold! You, the good and the brave, the wise in council, and the strong in battle, have you not to support the reputation your own deeds have won, a reputation more honourable than mere flattery can supply! Good men love and honour you, the wicked fear, and the turbulent obey you; and is it not necessary you should exert yourself to ensure the endurance of that love, that honour, that wholesome fear, and that necessary obedience?"

As she thus spoke, the eye of her husband caught from hers courage and comfort, and it lightened as he took her hand and replied, "It is most true, my Mary, and I deserve thy rebuke, who forget what I am, in repining because I am not what I cannot be. I am now what the most famed ancestors of those I envy were, the mean man raised into eminence by his own exertions; and sure it is a boast as honourable to have those capacities which are necessary to the foundation of a family, as to be descended from one who possessed them some centuries before. The Hay of Luncarty, who bequeathed his bloody yoke to his lineage,—the 'dark gray man,' who first founded the house of Douglas, had yet less of ancestry to boast than I have. For thou knowest, Mary, that my name derives itself from a line of ancient warriors, although my immediate forefathers preferred the humble station in which thou didst first find them; and war and counsel are not less proper to the house of Glendonwyne, even in its most remote descendants, than to the proudest of their baronage."

He strode across the hall as he spoke; and the Lady smiled internally to observe how much his mind dwelt upon the prerogatives of birth, and endeavoured to establish his claims, however remote, to a share in them, at the very moment when he affected to hold them in contempt. It will easily be guessed, however, that she permitted no symptom to escape her that could show she was sensible of the weakness of her husband, a perspicacity which perhaps his proud spirit could not very easily have brooked.

As he returned from the extremity of the hall, to which he had stalked while in the act of vindicating the title of the House of Glendonwyne in its most remote branches to the full privileges of aristocracy, "Where," he said, "is Wolf? I have not seen him since my return, and he was usually the first to welcome my home-coming."

"Wolf," said the Lady, with a slight degree of emphasis, for which, perhaps, she would have found it difficult to assign any reason even to her-

self, "Wolf is chained up for the present. He hath been surly to my page."

"Wolf chained up!—and Wolf surly to your page!" answered Sir Halbert Glendinning; "Wolf never was surly to any one; and the chain will either break his spirit or render him savage—So ho, there—set Wolf free directly."

He was obeyed; and the huge dog rushed into the hall, disturbing, by his unwieldy and boisterous gambols, the whole economy of reels, rocks, and distaffs, with which the maidens of the household were employed when the arrival of their lord was a signal to them to withdraw, and extracting from Lillias, who was summoned to put them again in order, the natural observation, "That the Laird's pet was as troublesome as the lady's page."

"And who is this page, Mary?" said the Knight, his attention again called to the subject by the observation of the waiting-woman.—"Who is this page, whom every one seems to weigh in the balance with my old friend and favourite, Wolf!—When did you aspire to the guilt of keeping a page, or who is the boy?"

"I trust, my Halbert," said the Lady, not without a blush, "you will not think your wife entitled to less attendance than other ladies of her quality?"

"Nay, Dame Mary," answered the Knight, "it is enough you desire such an attendant.—Yet I have never loved to nurse such useless menials—a lady's page—it may well suit the proud English dames to have a slender youth to bear their trains from bower to hall, fan them when they slumber, and touch the lute for them when they please to listen; but our Scottish matrons were wont to be above such vanities, and our Scottish youth ought to be bred to the spear and the stirrup."

"Nay, but, my husband," said the Lady, "I did but jest when I called this boy my page; he is in sooth a little orphan whom we saved from perishing in the lake, and whom I have since kept in the castle out of charity.—Lillias, bring little Roland hither."

Roland entered accordingly, and, flying to the Lady's side, took hold of the plaits of her gown, and then turned round, and gazed with an attention not unmingled with fear, upon the stately form of the Knight.—"Roland," said the Lady, "go kiss the hand of the noble Knight, and ask him to be thy protector."—But Roland obeyed not, and, keeping his station, continued to gaze anxiously and timidly on Sir Halbert Glendinning.—"Go to the Knight, boy," said the Lady; "what dost thou fear, child? Go, kiss Sir Halbert's hand."

"I will kiss his hand save yours, Lady," answered the boy.

"Nay, but do as you are commanded, child," replied the Lady.—"He is dashed by your presence," she said, apologizing to her husband; "but is he not a handsome boy?"

"And so is Wolf," said Sir Halbert, as he patted his huge four-footed favourite, "a handsome dog, but he has this double advantage over your new favourite, that he does what he is commanded, and hears not when he is praised."

"Nay, now you are displeased with me," replied the Lady; "and yet why should you be so! There is nothing wrong in relieving the distressed orphan, or in loving that which is in itself lovely and deserving of affection. But you have seen Mr Warden

¹ See Note A. *Glendonwyne of Glendonwyne*.

at Edinburgh, and he has set you against the poor boy."

"My dear Mary," answered her husband, "Mr Warden better knows his place than to presume to interfere either in your affairs or in mine. I neither blame your relieving this boy, nor your kindness for him. But, I think, considering his birth and prospects, you ought not to treat him with injudicious fondness, which can only end in rendering him unfit for the humble situation to which Heaven has designed him."

"Nay, but, my Halbert, do but look at the boy," said the Lady, "and see whether he has not the air of being intended by Heaven for something nobler than a mere peasant. May he not be designed, as others have been, to rise out of a humble situation into honour and eminence?"

Thus far had she proceeded, when the consciousness that she was treading upon delicate ground at once occurred to her, and induced her to take the most natural, but the worst of all courses on such occasions, whether in conversation or in an actual bog, namely, that of stopping suddenly short in the illustration which she had commenced. Her brow crimsoned, and that of Sir Halbert Glendinning was slightly overcast. But it was only for an instant; for he was incapable of mistaking his lady's meaning, or supposing that she meant intentional disrespect to him.

"Be it as you please, my love," he replied; "I owe you too much, to contradict you in aught which may render your solitary mode of life more endurable. Make of this youth what you will, and, you have my full authority for doing so. But remember he is your charge, not mine—remember he hath limbs to do man service, a soul and a tongue to worship God; breed him, therefore, to be true to his country, and to Heaven; and for the rest, dispose of him as you list—it is, and shall rest, your own matter."

This conversation decided the fate of Roland Græme, who from thenceforward was little noticed by the master of the mansion of Avenel, but indulged and favoured by its mistress.

This situation led to many important consequences, and, in truth, tended to bring forth the character of the youth in all its broad lights and deep shadows. As the Knight himself seemed tacitly to disclaim alike interest and control over the immediate favourite of his lady, young Roland was, by circumstance, exempted from the strict discipline to which, as the retainer of a Scottish man of rank, he would otherwise have been subjected, according to all the rigour of the age. But the steward, or master of the household—such was the proud title assumed by the head domestic of each petty baron—deemed it not advisable to interfere with the favourite of the Lady, and especially since she had brought the estate into the present family. Master Jasper Wingate was a man experienced, as he often boasted, in the ways of great families, and knew how to keep the steerage even when wind and tide chance to be in contradiction.

This prudent personage winked at much, and avoided giving opportunity for farther offence, by requesting little of Roland Græme beyond the degree of attention which he was himself disposed to pay; rightly conjecturing, that however lowly the place which the youth might hold in the favour

of the Knight of Avenel, still to make an evil report of him would make an enemy of the Lady, without securing the favour of her husband. With these prudential considerations, and doubtless not without an eye to his own ease and convenience, he taught the boy as much, and only as much, as he chose to learn, readily admitting whatever apology it pleased his pupil to allege in excuse for idleness or negligence. As the other persons in the castle, to whom such tasks were delegated, readily imitated the prudential conduct of the major-domo, there was little control used towards Roland Græme, who, of course, learned no more than what a very active mind, and a total impatience of absolute idleness, led him to acquire upon his own account, and by dint of his own exertions. The latter were especially earnest, when the Lady herself condescended to be his tutress, or to examine his progress.

It followed also from his quality as my Lady's favourite, that Roland was viewed with no peculiar good-will by the followers of the Knight, many of whom, of the same age, and apparently similar origin, with the fortunate page, were subjected to severe observance of the ancient and rigorous discipline of a feudal retainer. To these, Roland Græme was of course an object of envy, and, in consequence, of dislike and detraction; but the youth possessed qualities which it was impossible to depreciate. Pride, and a sense of early ambition, did for him what severity and constant instruction did for others. In truth, the youthful Roland displayed that early flexibility both of body and mind, which renders exercise, either mental or bodily, rather matter of sport than of study; and it seemed as if he acquired accidentally, and by starts, those accomplishments, which earnest and constant instruction, enforced by frequent reproof and occasional chastisement, had taught to others. Such military exercises, such lessons of the period, as he found it agreeable or convenient to apply to, he learned so perfectly, as to confound those who were ignorant how often the want of constant application is compensated by vivacity of talent and ardent enthusiasm. The lady, therefore, who were more regularly trained to arms, to horsemanship, and to other necessary exercises of the period, while they envied Roland Græme the indulgence or negligence with which he seemed to be treated, had little reason

to boast of their own superior acquirements; a few hours, with the powerful exertion of a most energetic will, seemed to do for him more than the regular instruction of weeks could accomplish for others.

Under these advantages, if, indeed, they were to be termed such, the character of young Roland began to develop itself. It was bold, peremptory, decisive, and overbearing; generous, if neither withstood nor contradicted; vehement and passionate, if censured or opposed. He seemed to consider himself as attached to no one, and responsible to no one, except his mistress, and even over her mind he had gradually acquired that species of ascendancy which indulgence is so apt to occasion. And although the immediate followers and dependents of Sir Halbert Glendinning saw his ascendancy with jealousy, and often took occasion to mortify his vanity, there wanted not those who were willing to acquire the favour of the Lady of Avenel by humouring and taking part with the youth whom

she protected; for although a favourite, as the poet assures us, has no friend, he seldom fails to have both followers and flatterers.

The partisans of Roland Græme, were chiefly to be found amongst the inhabitants of the little hamlet on the shore of the lake. These villagers, who were sometimes tempted to compare their own situation with that of the immediate and constant followers of the Knight, who attended him on his frequent journeys to Edinburgh and elsewhere, delighted in considering and representing themselves as more properly the subjects of the Lady of Avenel than of her husband. It is true, her wisdom and affection on all occasions discountenanced the distinction which was here implied; but the villagers persisted in thinking it must be agreeable to her to enjoy their peculiar and undivided homage, or at least in acting as if they thought so; and one chief mode by which they evinced their sentiments, was by the respect they paid to young Roland Græme, the favourite attendant of the descendant of their ancient lords. This was a mode of flattery too pleasing to encounter rebuke or censure; and the opportunity which it afforded the youth to form, as it were, a party of his own within the limits of the ancient barony of Avenel, added not a little to the audacity and decisive tone of a character, which was by nature bold, impetuous, and uncontrollable.

Of the two members of the household who had manifested an early jealousy of Roland Græme, the prejudices of Wolf were easily overcome; and in process of time the noble dog slept with Bran, Luath, and the celebrated hounds of ancient days. But Mr Warden, the chaplain, lived, and retained his dislike to the youth. That good man, single-minded and benevolent as he really was, entertained rather more than a reasonable idea of the respect due to him as a minister, and exacted from the inhabitants of the castle more deference than the haughty young page, proud of his mistress's favour, and petulant from youth and situation, was at all times willing to pay. His bold and free demeanour, his attachment to rich dress and decoration, his inaptitude to receive instruction, and his hardening himself against rebuke, were circumstances which induced the good old man, with more haste than charity, to set the forward page down as a vessel of wrath, and to pressage that the youth nursed that pride and haughtiness of spirit which goes before ruin and destruction. On the other hand, Roland evinced at times a marked dislike, and even something like contempt, of the chaplain. Most of the attendants and followers of Sir Halbert Glendinning entertained the same charitable thoughts as the reverend Mr Warden; but while Roland was favoured by their lady, and excluded by their lord, they saw no policy in making their opinions public.

Roland Græme was sufficiently sensible of the unpleasant situation in which he stood; but in the haughtiness of his heart he retorted upon the other domestics the distant, cold, and sarcastic manner in which they treated him, assumed an air of superiority which compelled the most obstinate to obedience, and had the satisfaction at least to be dreaded, if he was heartily hated.

The chaplain's marked dislike had the effect of recommending him to the attention of Sir Halbert's brother, Edward, who now, under the conventional

appellation of Father Ambrose, continued to be one of the few monks who, with the Abbot Eustatius, had, notwithstanding the nearly total downfall of their faith under the regency of Murray, been still permitted to linger in the cloisters at Kennaquhair. Respect to Sir Halbert had prevented their being altogether driven out of the Abbey, though their order was now in a great measure suppressed, and they were interdicted the public exercise of their ritual, and only allowed for their support a small pension out of their once splendid revenues. Father Ambrose, thus situated, was an occasional, though very rare visitant, at the Castle of Avenel, and was at such times observed to pay particular attention to Roland Græme, who seemed to return it with more depth of feeling than consisted with his usual habits.

Thus situated, years glided on, during which the Knight of Avenel continued to act a frequent and important part in the convulsions of his distracted country; while young Græme anticipated, both in wishes and personal accomplishments, the age which should enable him to emerge from the obscurity of his present situation.

CHAPTER IV.

Amid their cups that freely flow'd,
Their revelry and mirth,
A youthful lord tax'd Valentine
With base and doubtful birth.
Valentine and Orson.

WHEN Roland Græme was a youth about seventeen years of age, he chanced one summer morning to descend to the mew in which Sir Halbert Glendinning kept his hawks, in order to superintend the training of an eyas, or young hawk, which he himself, at the imminent risk of neck and limbs, had taken from a celebrated eyry in the neighbourhood, called Gledacraig. As he was by no means satisfied with the attention which had been bestowed on his favourite bird, he was not slack in testifying his displeasure to the falconer's lad, whose duty it was to have attended upon it.

"What, ho! sir knave," exclaimed Roland, "is it thus you feed the eyas with unwashed meat, as if you were gorging the foul brancher of a worthless hoodie-crow! by the gods, and thou hast neglected its castings also for these two days! Think'st thou I ventured my neck to bring the bird down from the crag, that thou shouldst spoil him by thy neglect?" And to add force to his remonstrances, he conferred a cuff or two on the negligent attendant of the hawks, who, shouting rather louder than was necessary under all the circumstances, brought the master falconer to his assistance.

Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel, was an Englishman by birth, but so long in the service of Glendinning, that he had lost much of his national attachment in that which he had formed to his master. He was a favourite in his department, jealous and conceited of his skill, as masters of the game usually are; for the rest of his character, he was a jester and a parcel poet (qualities which by no means abated his natural conceit), a jolly fellow, who, though a sound Protestant, loved a flagon of ale better than a long sermon, a stout man of his

hands when need required, true to his master, and a little presuming on his interest with him.

Adam Woodcock, such as we have described him, by no means relished the freedom used by young Graeme, in chastising his assistant. "Hey, hey, my Lady's page," said he, stepping between his own boy and Roland, "fair and softly, an it like your gilt jacket—hands off is fair play—if my boy has done amiss, I can beat him myself, and then you may keep your hands soft."

"I will beat him and thee too," answered Roland, without hesitation, "an you look not better after your business. See how the bird is cast away between you. I found the careless lurdane feeding him with unwashed flesh, and she an eyas."

"Go to," said the falconer, "thou art but an eyas thyself, child Roland.—What knowest thou of feeding? I say that the eyas should have her meat unwashed, until she becomes a bracher—'twere the ready way to give her the frounce, to wash her meat sooner, and so knows every one who knows a gled from a falcon."

"It is thine own laziness, thou false English blood, that dost nothing but drink and sleep," retorted the page, "and leaves that lither lad to do the work, which he minds as little as thou."

"And am I so idle then," said the falconer, "that have three cast of hawks to look after, at perch and mew, and to fly them in the field to boot?—and is my Lady's page so busy a man that he must take me up short?—and am I of false English blood?—I marvel what blood thou art—neither Engländer nor Scot—fish nor flesh—a bastard from the Debateable Land, without either kith, kin, or ally!—Marry, out upon thee, foul kite, that would fain be a tercel gentle!"

The reply to this sarcasm was a box on the ear, so well applied, that it overthrew the falconer into the cistern in which water was kept for the benefit of the hawks. Up started Adam Woodcock, his wrath no way appeased by the cold immersion, and seizing on a truncheon which stood by would have soon requited the injury he had received, had not Roland laid his hand on his poniard, and sworn by all that was sacred, that if he offered a stroke towards him, he would sheath the blade in his bowels. The noise was now so great, that more than one of the household came in, and amongst others the major-domo, a grave personage, already mentioned, whose gold chain and white wand intimidated his authority. At the appearance of this dignitary, the strife was for the present appeased. He embraced, however, so favourable an opportunity, to read Roland Graeme a shrewd lecture on the impropriety of his deportment to his fellow-menials, and to assure him, that, should he communicate this fray to his master, (who, though now on one of his frequent expeditions, was speedily expected to return,) which but for respect to his Lady he would most certainly do, the residence of the culprit in the Castle of Avenel would be but of brief duration. "But, however," added the prudent master of the household, "I will report the matter first to my Lady."

"Very just, very right, Master Wingate," exclaimed several voices together; "my Lady will consider if daggers are to be drawn on us for every

idle word, and whether we are to live in a well-ordered household, where there is the fear of God, or amongst drawn dirks and sharp knives."

The object of this general resentment darted an angry glance around him, and suppressing with difficulty the desire which urged him to reply in furious or in contemptuous language, returned his dagger into the scabbard, looked disdainfully around upon the assembled menials, turned short upon his heel, and pushing aside those who stood betwixt him and the door, left the apartment.

"This will be no tree for my nest," said the falconer, "if this cock-sparrow is to crow over us as he seems to do."

"He struck me with his switch yesterday," said one of the grooms, "because the tail of his worship's gelding was not trimmed altogether so as suited his humour."

"And I promise you," said the laundress, "my young master will stick nothing to call an honest woman slut and quean, if there be but a speck of soot upon his hand-collar."

"If Master Wingate do not his errand to my Lady," was the general result, "there will be no tarrying in the same house with Roland Graeme."

The master of the household heard them all for sometime, and then, motioning for universal silence, he addressed them with all the dignity of Malvolio himself.—"My masters,—not forgetting you, my mistresses,—do not think the worse of me that I proceed with as much care as haste in this matter. Our master is a gallant knight, and will have his sway at home and abroad, in word and deed, in hall and bower, as the saying is. Our Lady, my benison upon her, is also a noble person of long descent, and mightful heir of this place and barony, and she also loves her will; as for that matter, shew me the woman who doth not. Now, she hath favoured, doth favour, and will favour, this jack-an-ape,—for what good part about him I know not, save that as one noble lady will love a messen dog, and another a screaming popinjay, and a third a Barbary ape, so doth it please our noble dame to set her affections upon this stray elf of a page, for naught that I can think of, save that she was the cause of his being saved (the more's the pity) from drowning." And here Master Wingate made a pause.

"I would have been his caution for a gray goat against salt-water or fresh," said Roland's adversary, the falconer; "marry, if he crack not a rope for flabbing or for snatching, I will be content never to hood hawk again."

"Peace, Adam Woodcock," said Wingate, waving his hand; "I prithee, peace, man.—Now, my Lady liking this springale, as aforesaid, differs therein from my Lord, who loves never a bone in his skin. Now, is it for me to stir up strife betwixt them, and put as 'twere my finger betwixt the bark and the tree, on account of a pragmatical youngster, whom, nevertheless, I would willingly see whipped forth of the barony! Have patience, and this boil will break without our meddling. I have been in service since I wore a beard on my chin, till now that that beard is turned gray, and I have seldom known any one better themselves, even by taking the lady's part against the lord's; but never one who did not dirk himself, if he took the lord's against the lady's."

"And so," said Lillias, "we are to be crowed over, every one of us, men and women, cock and

¹ There is a difference amongst authorities how long the nestling hawk should be fed with flesh which has previously been washed.

hon, by this little upstart! — I will try titles with him first, I promise you. — I fancy, Master Wingate, for as wise as you look, you will be pleased to tell what you have seen to-day, if my lady commands you?"

"To speak the truth when my lady commands me," answered the prudential major-domo, "is in some measure my duty, Mistress Lillias; always providing for and excepting those cases in which it cannot be spoken without breeding mischief and inconvenience to myself or my fellow-servants; for the tongue of a tale-bearer breaketh boues as well as a Jeddart-staff."

"But this imp of Satan is none of your friends or fellow-servants," said Lillias; "and I trust, you mean not to stand up for him against the whole family besides!"

"Credit me, Mrs Lillias," replied the senior, "should I see the time fitting, I would with right good-will give him a lick with the rough side of my tongue."

"Enough said, Master Wingate," answered Lillias; "then trust me his song shall soon be laid. If my mistress does not ask me what is the matter below stairs before she be ten minutes of time older, she is no born woman, and my name is not Lillias Bradbourne."

In pursuance of her plan, Mistress Lillias failed not to present herself before her mistress with all the exterior of one who is possessed of an important secret; — that is, she had the corners of her mouth turned down, her eyes raised up, her lips pressed as fast together as if they had been sewed up, to prevent her blabbing, and an air of prim mystical importance diffused over her whole person and demeanour, which seemed to intimate, "I know something which I am resolved not to tell you!"

Lillias had rightly read her mistress's temper, who, wise and good as she was, was yet a daughter of grandame Eve, and could not witness this mysterious bearing on the part of her waiting-woman without longing to ascertain the secret cause. For a space, Mrs Lillias was obdurate to all inquiries, sighed, turned her eyes up higher yet to heaven, hoped for the best, but had nothing particular to communicate. All this, as was most natural and proper, only stimulated the Lady's curiosity; neither was her importunity to be parried with, — "Thank God, I am no makelate — no tale-bearer, — thank God, I never envied any one's favour, or was anxious to propale their misdeemeanour — only, thank God, there has been no bloodshed and murder in the house — that is all."

"Bloodshed and murder!" exclaimed the Lady, "what does the quean mean! — if you speak not plain-out, you shall have something you will scarce be thankful for."

"Nay, my Lady," answered Lillias, eager to disburden her mind, or, in Chaucer's phrase, to "unbuckle her mail," "if you bid me speak out the truth, you must not be moved with what might displease you — Roland Graeme has dirked Adam Woodcock — that is all."

"Good Heaven!" said the Lady, turning pale as ashes, "is the man slain?"

"No, madam," replied Lillias, "but slain he

would have been, if there had not been ready help; but may be, it is your Ladyship's pleasure that this young esquire shall poniard the servants, as well as switch and baton them."

"Go to, minion," said the Lady, "you are saucy — tell the master of the household to attend me instantly."

Lillias hastened to seek out Mr Wingate, and hurry him to his lady's presence, speaking as a word in season to him on the way, "I have set the stone a-trowling, look that you do not let it stand still."

The steward, too prudential a person to commit himself otherwise, answered, by a sly look and a nod of intelligence, and presently after stood in the presence of the Lady of Avenel, with a look of great respect for his lady, partly real, partly affected, and an air of great sagacity, which inferred no ordinary conceit of himself.

"How is this, Wingate," said the Lady, "and what rule do you keep in the castle, that the domestics of Sir Halbert Glendinning draw the dagger on each other, as in a cavern of thieves and murderers! — is the wounded man much hurt? and what — what hath become of the unhappy boy?"

"There is no one wounded as yet, madam," replied he of the golden chain; "it passes my poor skill to say how many may be wounded before Pasche, if some rule be not taken with this youth — not but the youth is a fair youth," he added, correcting himself, "and able at his exercise; but somewhat too ready with the ends of his fingers, the butt of his riding-switch, and the point of his dagger."

"And whose fault is that," said the Lady, "but yours, who should have taught him better discipline, than to brawl or to draw his dagger!"

"If it please your Ladyship so to impose the blame on me," answered the steward, "it is my part, doubtless, to bear it — only I submit to your consideration, that unless I nailed his weapon to the scabbard, I could no more keep it still, than I could fix quicksilver, which defied even the skill of Raymond Lullius."

"Tell me not of Raymond Lullius," said the Lady, losing patience, "but send me the chaplain hither. You grow all of you too wise for me, during your lord's long and repeated absences. I would to God his affairs would permit him to remain at home and rule his own household, for it passes my wit and skill!"

"Go I forbid, my Lady!" said the old domestic, "that you should sincerely think that you are now pleased to say: your old servants might well hope, that after so many years' duty, you would do their service more justice than to distrust their gray hairs, because they cannot rule the peevish humour of a green head, which the owner carries, it may be, a brace of inches higher than becomes him."

"Leave me," said the Lady; "Sir Halbert's return must now be expected daily, and he will look into these matters himself — leave me, I say, Wingate, without saying more of it. I know you are honest, and I believe the boy is petulant; and yet I think it is my favour which hath set all of you against him."

The steward bowed and retired, after having been silenced in a second attempt to explain the motives on which he acted.

¹ A species of battle-axe, so called as being in especial use in that ancientburgh, whose armorial bearings still represent an armed horseman brandishing such a weapon.

"The chaplain arrived; but neither from him did the Lady receive much comfort. On the contrary, she found him disposed, in plain terms, to lay to the door of her indulgence all the disturbances which the fiery temper of Roland Grame had already occasioned, or might hereafter occasion, in the family. "I would," he said, "honoured Lady, that you had deigned to be ruled by me in the outset of this matter, with it is easy to stem evil in the fountain, but hard to struggle against it in the stream. You, honoured madam, (a word which I do not use according to the vain forms of this world, but because I have ever loved and honoured you as an honourable and an elect lady,)—you, I say, madam, have been pleased, contrary to my poor but earnest counsel, to raise this boy from his station, into one approaching to your own."

"What mean you, reverend sir?" said the Lady; "I have made this youth a page—is there ought in my doing so that does not become my character and quality?"

"I dispute not, madam," said the pertinacious preacher, "your benevolent purpose in taking charge of this youth, or your title to give him this idle character of page, if such was your pleasure; though what the education of a boy in the train of a female can tend to, save to ingraft foppery and effeminacy on conceit and arrogance, it passes my knowledge to discover. But I blame you more directly for having taken little care to guard him against the perils of his condition, or to tame and humble a spirit naturally haughty, overbearing, and impatient. You have brought into your tower a lion's cub; delighted with the beauty of his fur, and the grace of his gambols, you have bound him with no fetters befitting the fierceness of his disposition. You have let him grow up as unawed as if he had been still a tenant of the forest, and now you are surprised, and call out for assistance, when he begins to ramp, rend, and tear, according to his proper nature."

"Mr Warden," said the Lady, considerably offended, "you are my husband's ancient friend, and I believe your love sincere to him and to his household. Yet let me say, that when I asked you for counsel, I expected not this aspect of rebuke. If I have done wrong in loving this poor orphan lad more than others of his class, I scarce think the error merited such severe censure; and if stricter discipline were required to keep his fiery temper in order, it ought, I think, to be considered, that I am a woman, and that if I have erred in this matter, it becomes a friend's part rather to aid than to rebuke me. I would these evils were taken order with before my lord's return. He loves not domestic discord or domestic brawls; and I would not willingly that he thought such could arise from one whom I favoured—What do you counsel me to do?"

"Dismiss this youth from your service, madam," replied the preacher.

"You cannot bid me do so," said the Lady; "you cannot, as a Christian and a man of humanity, bid me turn away an unprotected creature against whom my favour, my injudicious favour if you will, has reared up so many enemies."

"It is not necessary you should altogether abandon him, though you dismiss him to another service, or to a calling better suiting his station and character," said the preacher; "elsewhere he may be

an useful and profitable member of the commonwealth—here he is but a make-bate, and a stumbling-block of offence. The youth has snatches of sense and of intelligence, though he lacks industry. I will myself give him letters commendatory to Olearius Schindlerhausen, a learned professor at the famous university of Leyden, where they lack an under-janitor—where, besides gratis instruction, if God give him the grace to seek it, he will enjoy five marks by the year, and the professor's cast-off suit, which he disparts with biennially."

"This will never do, good Mr Warden," said the Lady, scarce able to suppress a smile; "we will think more at large upon this matter. In the meanwhile, I trust to your remonstrances with this wild boy and with the family, for restraining these violent and unseemly jealousies and bursts of passion; and I entreat you to press on him and them their duty in this respect towards God, and towards their master."

"You shall be obeyed, madam," said Warden. "On the next Thursday I exhort the family, and will, with God's blessing, so wrestle with the demon of wrath and violence, which hath entered into my little flock, that I trust to hound the wolf out of the fold, as if he were chased away with bun-dogs."

This was the part of the conference from which Mr Warden derived the greatest pleasure. The pulpit was at that time the same powerful engine for affecting popular feeling which the press has since become, and he had been no unsuccessful preacher, as we have already seen. It followed as a natural consequence, that he rather over-estimated the powers of his own oratory, and, like some of his brethren about the period, was glad of an opportunity to handle any matters of importance, whether public or private, the discussion of which could be dragged into his discourse. In that rude age the delicacy was unknown which prescribed time and place to personal exhortations; and as the court-preacher often addressed the King individually, and dictated to him the conduct he ought to observe in matters of state, so the nobleman himself, or any of his retainers, were, in the chapel of the feudal castle, often incensed or appalled, as the case might be, by the discussion of their private faults in the evening exercise, and by spiritual censures directed against them, specifically, personally, and by name.

The sermon, by means of which Henry Warden purposed to restore concord and good order to the Castle of Avenel, bore for text the well-known words, *"He who striketh with the sword shall perish by the sword,"* and was a singular mixture of good sense and powerful oratory with pedantry and bad taste. He enlarged a good deal on the word *striking*, which he assured his hearers comprehended blows given with the point as well as with the edge, and more generally, shooting with hand-gun, cross-bow, or long-bow, thrusting with a lance, or doing any thing whatever by which death might be occasioned to the adversary. In the same manner, he proved satisfactorily, that the word *sword* comprehended all descriptions, whether back-sword or basket-hilt, cut-and-thrust or rapier, falchion, or scimitar. "But if," he continued, with still greater animation, "the text included in its anathema those who strike with any of those weapons which man hath devised for the exercise of his open hostility, still more doth it comprehend such as from their form and size are devised rather for the gratification of

privy malice by treachery, than for the destruction of an enemy prepared and standing upon his defence. Such," he proceeded, looking sternly at the place where the page was seated on a cushion at the feet of his mistress, and wearing in his crimson belt a gay dagger with a gilded hilt, — "such, more especially, I hold to be those implements of death, which, in our modern and fantastic times, are worn not only by thieves and cut-throats, to whom they most properly belong, but even by those who attend upon women, and wait in the chambers of honourable ladies. Yes, my friends, — every species of this unhappy weapon, framed for all evil and for no good, is comprehended under this deadly denunciation, whether it be a stilet, which we have borrowed from the treacherous Italian, or a dirk, which is borne by the savage Highlandman, or a whinger, which is carried by our own border-thieves and cut-throats, or a dudgeon-dagger, all are alike engines invented by the devil himself, for ready implements of deadly wrath, sudden to execute, and difficult to be parried. Even the common sword-and-buckler brawler despises the use of such a treacherous and malignant instrument, which is therefore fit to be used, not by men or soldiers, but by those who, trained under female discipline, become themselves effeminate hermaphrodites, having female spite and female cowardice added to the infirmities and evil passions of their masculine nature."

The effect which this oration produced upon the assembled congregation of Avoncl cannot very easily be described. The Ladies seemed at once embarrassed and offended; the menials could hardly contain, under an affectation of deep attention, the joy with which they heard the chaplain launch his thunders at the head of the unpopular favourite, and the weapon which they considered as a badge of affectation and finery. Mrs Lillias crested and drew up her head with all the deep-felt pride of gratified resentment; while the steward, observing a strict neutrality of aspect, fixed his eyes upon an old scutcheon on the opposite side of the wall, which he seemed to examine with the utmost accuracy, more willing, perhaps, to incur the censure of being inattentive to the sermon, than that of seeming to listen with marked approbation to what appeared so distasteful to his mistress.

The unfortunate subject of the harangue, whom nature had endowed with passions which had hitherto found no effectual restraint, could not disguise the resentment which he felt at being thus directly held up to the scorn, as well as the censure, of the assembled inhabitants of the little world in which he lived. His brow grew red, his lip grew pale, he set his teeth, he clenched his hand, and then with mechanical readiness grasped the weapon of which the clergyman had given so hideous a character; and at length, as the preacher heightened the colouring of his invective, he felt his rage become so ungovernable, that, fearful of being hurried into some deed of desperate violence, he rose up, traversed the chapel with hasty steps, and left the congregation.

The preacher was surprised into a sudden pause, while the fiery youth shot across him like a flash of lightning, regarding him as he passed, as if he had wished to dart from his eyes the same power of blighting and of consuming. But no sooner had he crossed the chapel, and shut with violence

behind him the door of the vaulted entrance by which it communicated with the castle, than the impropriety of his conduct supplied Warden with one of those happier subjects for eloquence, of which he knew how to take advantage for making a suitable impression on his hearers. He paused for an instant, and then pronounced, in a slow and solemn voice, the deep anathema: "He hath gone out from us because he was not of us—the sick man hath been offended at the wholesome bitter of the medicine—the wounded patient hath flinched from the friendly knife of the surgeon—the sheep hath fled from the sheepfold and delivered himself to the wolf, because he could not assume the quiet and humble conduct demanded of us by the great Shepherd. Ah! my brethren, beware of wrath—beware of pride—beware of the deadly and destroying sin which so often shews itself to our frail eyes in the garments of light! What is our earthly honour? Pride, and pride only—What our earthly gifts and graces? Pride and vanity. Voyagers speak of Indian men who deck themselves with shells, and anoint themselves with pigments, and boast of their attire as we do of our miserable carnal advantages—Pride could draw down the morning-star from Heaven even to the verge of the pit—Pride and self-opinion kindled the flaming sword which waves us off from Paradise—Pride made Adam mortal, and a weary wanderer on the face of the earth, which he had else been at this day the immortal lord of—Pride brought amongst us sin, and doubles every sin it has brought. It is the outpost which the Devil and the flesh most stubbornly maintain against the assaults of grace; and until it be subdued, and its barriers levelled with the very earth, there is more hope of a fool than of the sinner. Rend, then, from your bosoms this accursed shoot of the fatal apple; tear it up by the roots, though it be twisted with the chords of your life. Profit by the example of the miserable sinner that has passed from us, and embrace the means of grace while it is called to-day—ere your conscience is seared as with a fire-brand, and your ears deafened like those of the adder, and your heart hardened like the nether mill-stone. Up, then, and be doing—wrestle and overcome; resist, and the enemy shall flee from you—Watch and pray, lest ye fall into temptation, and let the stumbling of others be your warning and your example. Above all, rely not on yourselves, for such self-confidence is even the worst symptom of the disorder itself. The Pharisee, perhaps, deemed himself humble while he stooped in the Temple, and thanked God that he was not as other men, and even as the publican. But while his knees touched the marble pavement, his head was as high as the topmost pinnacle of the Temple. Do not, therefore, deceive yourselves, and offer false coin, where the purest you can present is but as dross—think not that such will pass the assay of Omnipotent Wisdom. Yet shrink not from the task; because, as is my bounden duty, I do not disguise from you its difficulties. Self-searching can do much—Meditation can do much—Grace can do all."

And he concluded with a touching and animating exhortation to his hearers to seek divine grace, which is perfected in human weakness.

The audience did not listen to this address without being considerably affected; though it might be doubted whether the feelings of triumph, excited

by the disgraceful retreat of the favourite page, did not greatly qualify in the minds of many the exhortations of the preacher to charity and to humility. And, in fact, the expression of their countenances much resembled the satisfied triumphant air of a set of children, who, having just seen a companion punished for a fault in which they had no share, con their task with double glee, both because they themselves are out of the scrape, and because the culprit is in it.

With very different feelings did the Lady of Avenel seek her own apartment. She felt angry at Warden having made a domestic matter, in which she took a personal interest, the subject of such public discussion. But this she knew the good man claimed as a branch of his Christian liberty as a preacher, and also that it was vindicated by the universal custom of his brethren. But the self-willed conduct of her protégé afforded her yet deeper concern. That he had broken through in so remarkable a degree, not only the respect due to her presence, but that which was paid to religious admonition in those days with such peculiar reverence, argued a spirit as untamable as his enemies had represented him to possess. And yet so far as he had been under her own eye, she had seen no more of that fiery spirit than appeared to her to become his years and his vivacity. This opinion might be founded in some degree on partiality; in some degree, too, it might be owing to the kindness and indulgence which she had always extended to him; but still she thought it impossible that she could be totally mistaken in the estimate she had formed of his character. The extreme of violence is scarce consistent with a course of continued hypocrisy, (although Lilius charitably hinted, that in some instances they were happily united,) and therefore she could not exactly trust the report of others against her own experience and observation. The thoughts of this orphan boy clung to her heartstrings with a fondness for which she herself was unable to account. He seemed to have been sent to her by Heaven, to fill up those intervals of languor and vacuity which deprived her of much enjoyment. Perhaps he was not less dear to her, because she well saw that he was a favourite with no one else, and because she felt, that to give him up was to afford the judgment of her husband and others a triumph over her own; a circumstance not quite indifferent to the best of spouses of either sex.

In short, the Lady of Avenel formed the internal resolution, that she would not desert her page while her page could be rationally protected; and, with the view of ascertaining how far this might be done, she caused him to be summoned to her presence.

CHAPTER V.

In the wild storm,
The seaman hews his mast down, and the merchant
Heaves to the billows wares he once deem'd precious;
So prince and peer, mid popular contentions,
Cast off their favourites.

Old Play.

It was some time ere Roland Græme appeared. The messenger (his old friend Lilius) had at first attempted to open the door of his little apartment

with the charitable purpose, doubtless, of enjoying the confusion, and marking the demeanour of the culprit. But an oblong bit of iron, yelped a bolt, was passed across the door on the inside, and prevented her benign intentions. Lilius knocked and called at intervals. "Roland — Roland Græme — Master Roland Græme," (an emphasis on the word Master,) "will you be pleased to undo the door? — What ails you? — are you at your prayers in private, to complete the devotion which you left unfinished in public? — Surely we must have a screened seat for you in the chapel, that your gentility may be free from the eyes of common folks!" Still no whisper was heard in reply. "Well, master Roland," said the waiting-maid, "I must tell my mistress, that if she would have an answer, she must either come herself, or send those on errand to you who can beat the door down."

"What says your Lady?" answered the page from within.

"Hurry, open the door, and you shall hear," answered the waiting-maid. "I trow it becomes my Lady's message to be listened to face to face; and I will not for your idle pleasure, whistle it through a key-hole."

"Your mistress's name," said the page, opening the door, "is too fair a cover for your impertinence — What says my Lady?"

"That you will be pleased to come to her directly, in the withdrawing-room," answered Lilius. "I presume she has some directions for you concerning the forms to be observed in leaving chapel in future."

"Say to my Lady, that I will directly wait on her," answered the page; and returning into his apartment, he once more locked the door in the face of the waiting-maid.

"Rare courtesy!" muttered Lilius; and, returning to her mistress, acquainted her that Roland Græme would wait on her when it suited his convenience.

"What! is that his addition or your own phrase, Lilius?" said the Lady, coolly.

"Nay, madam," replied the attendant, not directly answering the question, "he looked as if he could have said much more impertinent things than that, if I had been willing to hear them. — But here he comes to answer for himself."

Roland Græme entered the apartment with a lofter mien, and somewhat a higher colour, than his wont; there was embarrassment in his manner, but it was neither that of fear nor of penitence.

"Young man," said the Lady, "what trow you I am to think of your conduct this day?"

"If it has offended you, madam, I am deeply grieved," replied the youth.

"To have offended me alone," replied the Lady, "were but little — You have been guilty of conduct which will highly offend your master — of violence to your fellow-servants, and of disrespect to God himself, in the person of his ambassador."

"Permit me again to reply," said the page, "that if I have offended my only mistress, friend, and benefactress, it includes the sum of my guilt, and deserves the sum of my penitence — Sir Halbert Glendinning calls me not servant, nor do I call him master — he is not entitled to blame me for chastising an insolent groom — nor do I fear the wrath of Heaven for treating with scorn the unauthorized interference of a meddling preacher."

The Lady of Avenel had before this seen symptoms in her favourite of boyish petulance, and of impatience of censure or reproof. But his present demeanour was of a graver and more determined character, and she was for a moment at a loss how she should treat the youth, who seemed to have at once assumed the character not only of a man, but of a bold and determined one. She paused an instant, and then assuming the dignity which was natural to her, she said, "Is it to me, Roland, that you hold this language? Is it for the purpose of making me repent the favour I have shewn you, that you declare yourself independent both of an earthly and a Heavenly master? Have you forgotten what you were, and to what the loss of my protection would speedily again reduce you?"

"Lady," said the page, "I have forgot nothing. I remember but too much. I know, that but for you, I should have perished in your blue waves," pointing, as he spoke to the lake, which was seen through the window, agitated by the western wind. "Your goodness has gone farther, madam—you have protected me against the malice of others, and against my own folly. You are free, if you are willing, to abandon the orphan you have reared. You have left nothing undone by him, and he complains of nothing. And yet, Lady, do not think I have been ungrateful—I have endured something on my part, which I would have borne for the sake of no one but my benefactress."

"For my sake!" said the Lady; "and what is it that I can have subjected you to endure, which can be remembered with other feelings than those of thanks and gratitude?"

"You are too just, madam, to require me to be thankful for the cold neglect with which your husband has uniformly treated me—neglect not unmingled with fixed aversion. You are too just, madam, to require me to be grateful for the constant and unceasing marks of scorn and malevolence with which I have been treated by others, or for such a homily as that with which your reverend chaplain has, at my expense, this very day regaled the assembled household."

"Hear mortal ears the like of this!" said the waiting-maid, with her hands expanded, and her eyes turned up to heaven; "he speaks as if he were son of an earl, or of a belted knight the least penny!"

The page glanced on her a look of supreme contempt, but vouchsafed no other answer. His mistress, who began to feel herself seriously offended, and yet sorry for the youth's folly, took up the same tone.

"Indeed, Roland, you forget yourself so strangely," said she, "that you will tempt me to take serious measures to lower you in your own opinion by reducing you to your proper station in society."

"And that," added Lillias, "would be best done by turning him out the same beggar's brat that your ladyship took him in."

"Lillias speaks too rudely," continued the Lady, "but she has spoken the truth, young man; nor do I think I ought to spare that pride which hath so completely turned your head. You have been tricked up with fine garments, and treated like the son of a gentleman, until you have forgot the fountain of your churlish blood."

"Craving your pardon, most honourable madam,

Lillias hath not spoken truth, nor does your ladyship know aught of my descent, which should entitle you to treat it with such decided scorn. I am no beggar's brat—my grandmother begged from no one, here nor elsewhere—she would have perished sooner on the bare moor. We were harried out and driven from our home—a chance which has happened elsewhere, and to others. Avenel Castle, with its lake and its towers, was not at all times able to protect its inhabitants from want and desolation."

"Hear but his assurance!" said Lillias, "he upbraids my Lady with the distresses of her family!"

"It had indeed been a theme more gratefully spared," said the Lady, affected nevertheless with the allusion.

"It was necessary, madam, for my vindication," said the page, "or I had not even hinted at a word that might give you pain. But believe, honoured Lady, I am of no churl's blood. My proper descent I know not; but my only relation has said, and my heart has echoed it back and attested the truth, that I am sprung of gentle blood, and deserve gentle usage."

"And upon an assurance so vague as this," said the Lady, "do you propose to expect all the regard, all the privileges, befitting high rank and distinguished birth, and become a contender for concessions which are only due to the noble? Go to, sir, know yourself, or the master of the household shall make you know you are liable to the scourge as a misapert boy. You have tasted too little the discipline fit for your age and station."

"The master of the household shall taste of my dagger, ere I taste of his discipline," said the page, giving way to his restrained passion. "Lady, I have been too long the vassal of a pantoufle, and the slave of a silver whistle. You must henceforth find some other to answer your call; and let him be of birth and spirit mean enough to brook the scorn of your menials, and to call a church vassal his master."

"I have deserved this insult," said the Lady, colouring deeply, "for so long enduring and fostering your petulance. Begone, sir. Leave this castle to-night—I will send you the means of subsistence till you find some honest mode of support, though I fear your imaginary grandeur will be above all others, save those of rapine and violence. Begone, sir, and see my face no more."

The page threw himself at her feet in an agony of sorrow. "My dear an' honoured mistress," he said, but was unable to bring out another syllable.

"Arise, sir," said the Lady, "and let go my mantle—hypocrisy is a poor cloak for ingratitude."

"I am incapable of either, madam," said the page, springing up with the hasty start of passion which belonged to his rapid and impetuous temper. "Think not I meant to implore permission to reside here; it has been long my determination to leave Avenel, and I will never forgive myself for having permitted you to say the word *begone*, ere I said, 'I leave you.' I did but kneel to ask your forgiveness for an ill-considered word used in the height of displeasure, but which ill became my mouth, as addressed to you. Other grace I asked not—you have done much for me—but I repeat, that you better know what you yourself have done, than what I have suffered."

"Roland," said the Lady, somewhat appeased and relenting towards her favourite, "you had me to appeal to when you were aggrieved. You were neither called upon to suffer wrong, nor entitled to resent it, when you were under my protection."

"And what," said the youth, "if I sustained wrong from those you loved and favoured, was I to disturb your peace with idle tale-bearings and eternal complaints? No, madam; I have borne my own burden in silence, and without disturbing you with murmurs; and the respect which you accuse me of wanting, furnishes the only reason why I have neither appealed to you, nor taken vengeance at my own hand in a manner far more effectual. It is well, however, that we part. I was not born to be a stipendiary, favoured by his mistress, until ruined by the calumnies of others. May Heaven multiply its choicest blessings on your honoured head; and, for your sake, upon all that are dear to you!"

He was about to leave the apartment, when the Lady called upon him to return. He stood still, while she thus addressed him: "It was not my intention, nor would it be just even in the height of my displeasure, to dismiss you without the means of support; take this purse of gold."

"Forgive me, Lady," said the boy, "and let me go hence with the consciousness that I have not been degraded to the point of accepting alms. If my poor services can be placed against the expense of my apparel and my maintenance, I only remain debtor to you for my life, and that alone is a debt which I can never repay; put up then that purse, and only say, instead, that you do not part from me in anger."

"No, not in anger," said the Lady, "in sorrow rather for your wilfulness; but take the gold, you cannot but need it."

"May God evermore bless you for the kind tone and the kind word! but the gold I cannot take. I am able of body, and do not lack friends so wholly as you may think; for the time may come that I may yet shew myself more thankful than by mere words." He threw himself on his knees, kissed the hand which she did not withdraw, and then hastily left the apartment.

Lilias, for a moment or two, kept her eye fixed on her mistress, who looked so unusually pale, that she seemed about to faint; but the Lady instantly recovered herself, and declining the assistance which her attendants offered her, walked to her own apartment.

CHAPTER VI.

Thou hast each secret of the household, Francia.
I dare be sworn thou hast been in the buttery
steeping thy curious humour in fat ale.
And in the butler's tattle—ay, or chattering
With the glib waiting-woman o'er her comfits—
These bear the key to each domestic mystery.

Old Play.

UPON the morrow succeeding the scene we have described, the disgraced favourite left the castle; and at breakfast-time the cautious old steward and Mrs Lilias sat in the apartment of the latter personage, holding grave converse on the important event of the day, sweetened by a small treat of com-

fits, to which the providence of Mr Wingate had added a little flask of racy canary.

"He is gone at last," said the abigail, sipping her glass; "and here is to his good journey."

"Amen," answered the steward, gravely; "I wish the poor deserted lad no ill."

"And he is gone like a wild-duck, as he came," continued Mrs Lilias; "no lowering of drawbridges, or pacing along canseways, for him. My master has pushed off in the boat which they call the little Herod, (more shame to them for giving the name of a Christian to wood and iron,) and has rowed himself by himself to the farther side of the loch, and off and away with himself, and left all his misery strewn about his room. I wonder who is to clean his trumpery out after him—though the things are worth lifting, too."

"Doubtless, Mistress Lilias," answered the master of the household; "in the which case, I am free to think, they will not long cumber the floor."

"And now tell me, Master Wingate," continued the damsel, "do not the very cockles of your heart rejoice at the house being rid of this upstart whelp, that flung us all into shadow?"

"Why, Mistress Lilias," replied Wingate, "as to rejoicing—those who have lived as long in great families as has been my lot, will be in no hurry to rejoice at any thing. And for Roland Greeme, though he may be a good riddance in the main, yet what says the very sooth proverb, 'Seldom comes a better.'"

"Seldom comes a better, indeed!" echoed Mrs Lilias. "I say, never came come a worse, or one half so bad. He might have been the ruin of our poor dear mistress," (here she used her kerchief,) "body and soul, and estate too; for she spent more coin on his apparel than on any four servants about the house."

"Mistress Lilias," said the sage steward, "I do opine that our mistress requirerth not this pity at your hands, being in all respects competent to take care of her own body, soul, and estate into the bargain."

"You would not mayhap have said so," answered the waiting-woman, "had you seen how like Lot's wife she looked when young master took his leave. My mistress is a good lady, and a virtuous, and a well-doing lady, and a well-spoken of—but I would not Sir Halbert had seen her last evening for two and a plack."

"Oh, foy! foy! foy!" reiterated the steward; "servants should hear and see, and say nothing. Besides that, my Lady is utterly devoted to Sir Halbert, as well she may, being, as he is, the most renowned knight in these parts."

"Well, well," said the abigail, "I mean no more harm; but they that seek least reffown abroad, are most apt to find quiet at home, that's all; and my Lady's lonesome situation is to be considered, that made her fain to take up with the first beggar's brat that a dog brought her out of the loch."

"And, therefore," said the steward, "I say, rejoice not too much, or too hastily, Mistress Lilias; for if your Lady wished a favourite to pass away the time, depend upon it, the time will not pass lighter now that he is gone. So she will have another favourite to choose for herself; and be assured, if she wishes such a toy, she will not lack one."

"And where should she choose one, but among her own tried and faithful servants," said Mrs Lilias,

"who have broken her bread, and drunk her drink, for so many years? I have known many a lady as high as she, that never thought either of a friend or favourite beyond their own waiting-woman — always having a proper respect, at the same time, for their old and faithful master of the household," Master Wingate."

"Truly, Mistress Lillias," replied the steward, "I do partly see the mark at which you shoot, but I doubt your bolt will fall short. Matters being with our Lady as it likes you to suppose, it will neither be your crimped pinnars, Mrs Lillias, (speaking of them with due respect,) nor my silver hair, or golden chain, that will fill up the void which Roland Graeme must needs leave in our Lady's leisure. There will be a learned young divine with some new doctrine — a learned leech with some new drug — a bold cavalier, who will not be refused the favour of wearing her colours at a running at the ring — a cunning harper that could harp the heart out of woman's breast, as they say Signor David Rizzio did to our poor Queen; — these are the sort of folk who supply the loss of a well-favoured favourite, and not an old steward, or a middle-aged waiting-woman."

"Well," replied Lillias, "you have experience, Master Wingate, and truly I would my master would leave off his pricking hither and thither, and look better after the affairs of his household. There will be a papistrie among us next, for what should I see among master's clothes but a string of gold beads? I promise you, *aces* and *oredos* both! — I seized on them like a falcon."

"I doubt it not, I doubt it not," said the steward, sagaciously nodding his head; "I have often noticed that the boy had strange observances which savoured of popery, and that he was very jealous to conceal them. But you will find the Catholic under the Presbyterian cloak as often as the knave under the friar's hood — what then? we are all mortal — Right proper beads they are," he added, looking attentively at them, "and may weigh four ounces of fine gold."

"And I will have them melted down presently," she said, "before they be the misguiding of some poor minded soul."

"Very cautious, indeed, Mistress Lillias," said the steward, nodding his head in assent.

"I will have them made," said Mrs Lillias, "into a pair of shoe-buckles; I would not wear the Pope's trinkets, or whatever has once borne the shape of them, one inch above my instep, were they diamonds instead of gold — But this is what has come of Father Ambrose coming about the castle, as dompre as a cat that is about to steal cream."

"Father Ambrose is our master's brother," said the steward gravely.

"Very true, Master Wingate," answered the dame; "but is that a good reason why he should pervert the king's liege subjects to papistrie?"

"Heaven forbid, Mistress Lillias," answered the sententious major-domo; "but yet there are worse folk than the Papists."

"I wonder where they are to be found," said the waiting-woman, with some asperity; "but I believe, Master Wingate, if one were to speak to you about the devil himself, you would say there were worse people than Satan."

"Assuredly I might say so," replied the steward, "supposing that I saw Satan standing at my elbow."

The waiting-woman started, and having exclaimed, "God bless us!" added, "I wonder, Master Wingate, you can take pleasure in frightening one thus."

"Nay, Mistress Lillias, I had no such purpose," was the reply; "but look you here — the Papists are but put down for the present, but who knows how long; this word *present* will last! There are two great Popish earls in the north of England, that abominate the very word reformation; I mean the Northumberland and Westmoreland Earls, men of power enough to shake any throne in Christendom. Then, though our Scottish king be, God bless him, a true Protestant, yet he is but a boy; and here is his mother that was our queen — I trust there is no harm to say God bless her too — and she is a Catholic; and many begin to think she has had but hard measure, such as the Hamiltons in the west, and some of our Border clans here, and the Gordons in the north, who are all wishing to see a new world; and if such a new world should chance to come up, it is like that the Queen will take back her own crown, and that the mass and the cross will come up, and then down go pulpits, Geneva-gowning, and black silk skull-caps."

"And have you, Master Jasper Wingate, who have heard the word, and listened unto pure and precious Mr Henry Warden, have you, I say, the patience to speak, or but to think, of popery coming down on us like a storm, or of the woman Mary again making the royal seat of Scotland a throne of abomination? No marvel that you are so civil to the cowed monk, Father Ambrose, when he comes hither with his downcast eyes that he never raises to my Lady's face, and with his low sweet-toned voice, and his benedictes, and his benisons; and who so ready to take them kindly as Master Wingate?"

"Mistress Lillias," replied the butler, with an air which was intended to close the debate, "there are reasons for all things. If I received Father Ambrose debonairly, and suffered him to steal a word now and then with this same Roland Graeme, it was not that I cared a brass bodle for his benison or malison either, but only because I respected my master's blood. And who can answer, if Mary comes in again, whether he may not be as stout a tree to lean to as ever his brother hath proved to us? For down goes the Earl of Murray when the Queen comes by her own again; and good is his luck if he can keep the head on his own shoulders. And down goes our Knight, with the Earl, his patron; and who so like to mount into his empty saddle as this same Father Ambrose? The Pope of Rome can soon dispense with his vows, and then we should have Sir Edward the soldier, instead of Ambrose the priest."

Anger and astonishment kept Mrs Lillias silent, while her old friend, in his self-complacent manner, was making known to her his political speculations. At length her resentment found utterance in words of great ire and scorn. "What, Master Wingate! have you eaten my mistress's bread, to say nothing of my master's, so many years, that you could live to think of her being dispossessed of her own Castle of Aveueil, by a wretched monk, who is not a drop's blood to her in the way of relation? I, that am but a woman, would try first whether my rock or his cowl was the better metal. Shame on you, Master Wingate! If I had not held you as so old an acquaintance, this should have gone to my

Lady's ears, though I had been called pickthank and tale-pyret for my pains, as when I told of Roland Græme shooting the wild swan."

Master Wingate was somewhat dismayed at perceiving, that the detail which he had given of his far-sighted political views had produced on his hearer rather suspicion of his fidelity, than admiration of his wisdom, and endeavoured, as hastily as possible, to apologize and to explain, although internally extremely offended at the unreasonable view, as he deemed it, which it had pleased Mistress Lillias Bradbourne to take of his expressions; and mentally convinced that her disapprobation of his sentiments arose solely out of the consideration, that though Father Ambrose, supposing him to become the master of the castle, would certainly require the services of a steward, yet those of a waiting-woman would, in the supposed circumstances, be altogether superfluous.

After his explanation had been received as explanations usually are, the two friends separated; Lillias to attend the silver whistle which called her to her mistress's chamber, and the sapient major-domo to the duties of his own department. They parted with less than their usual degree of reverence and regard; for the steward felt that his worldly wisdom was rebuked by the more disinterested attachment of the waiting-woman, and Mistress Lillias Bradbourne was compelled to consider her old friend as something little better than a time-server.

CHAPTER VII.

When I line a saxepe under my thumb,
Then I get credit in like town;
But when I am pair they bid me gae by—
Oh, poverty parts good company!

Old Song.

WHILE the departure of the page afforded subject for the conversation which we have detailed in our last chapter, the late favourite was far advanced on his solitary journey, without well knowing what was its object, or what was likely to be its end. He had rowed the skiff in which he left the castle, to the side of the lake most distant from the village, with the desire of escaping from the notice of the inhabitants. His pride whispered, that he would be, in his discarded state, only the subject of their wonder and compassion; and his generosity told him, that any mark of sympathy which his situation should excite, might be unfavourably reported at the castle. A trifling incident convinced him he had little to fear for his friends on the latter score. He was met by a young man some years older than himself, who had on former occasions been but too happy to be permitted to share in his sports in the subordinate character of his assistant. Ralph Fisher approached to greet him, with all the alacrity of an humble friend.

"What, Master Roland, abroad on this side, and without either hawk or hound?"

"Hawk or hound," said Roland, "I will never perhaps holla to again. I have been dismissed—that is, I have left the castle."

Ralph was surprised. "What! you are to pass into the Knight's service, and take the black jack and the lance?"

"Indeed," replied Roland Græme, "I am not—I am now leaving the service of Avenel for ever."

"And whither are you going, then?" said the young peasant.

"Nay, that is a question which it craves time to answer—I have that matter to determine yet," replied the disgraced favourite.

"Nay, nay," said Ralph, "I warrant you it is the same to you which way you go—thy Lady would not dismiss you till she had put some lying into the pouches of your doublet."

"Sordid slave!" said Roland Græme, "dost thou think I would have accepted a boon from one who was giving me over a prey to detraction and to ruin, at the instigation of a canting priest and a meddling serving-woman? The bread that I had bought with such an alms would have choked me at the first mouthful."

Ralph looked at his quondam friend with an air of wonder not unminged with contempt. "Well," he said, at length, "no occasion for passion—each man knows his own stomach best—but, were I on a black moor at this time of day, not knowing whither I was going, I should be glad to have a broad piece or two in my pouch, come by them as I could.—But perhaps you will go with me to my father's—that is, for a night, for to-morrow we expect my uncle Menglaus and all his folk; but, as I said, for one night—"

The cold-blooded limitation of the offered shelter to one night only, and that tendered most unwillingly, offended the pride of the discarded favourite.

"I would rather sleep on the fresh heather, as I have done many a night on less occasion," said Roland Græme, "than in the smoky garret of your father, that smells of pent smoke and usquebaugh like a Highlander's plaid."

"You may choose, my master, if you are so nice," replied Ralph Fisher; "you may be glad to smell a peat-fire, and usquebaugh too, if you journey long in the fashion you propose. You might have said God-a-mercy for your proffer, though—it is not every one will put themselves in the way of ill-will by harbouring a discarded serving-man."

"Ralph," said Roland Græme, "I would pray you to remember that I have switched you before now, and this is the same riding-wand which you have tasted."

Ralph, who was a thickset clownish figure, arrived at his full strength, and conscious of the most complete personal superiority, laughed contemptuously at the threats of the slight-made stripling.

"It may be the same wand," he said, "but not the same hand; and that is as good rhyme as if it were in a ballad. Look you, my Lady's page that was when your switch was up, it was no fear of you, but of your betters, that kept mine down—and I wot not what hinders me from clearing old scores with this hazel rung, and shewing you it was your Lady's livery-coat which I spared, and not your flesh and blood, Master Roland."

In the midst of his rage, Roland Græme was just wise enough to see, that by continuing this altercation, he would subject himself to very rude treatment from the boor, who was so much older and stronger than himself; and while his antagonist, with a sort of jeering laugh of defiance, seemed to provoke the contest, he felt the full bitterness of his own degraded condition, and burst into a passion

of tears, which he in vain endeavoured to conceal with both his hands.

Even the rough churl was moved with the distress of his quondam companion.

"Nay, Master Roland," he said, "I did but as 'twere jest with thee—I would not harm thee, man, were it but for old acquaintance sake. But ever look to a man's inches ere you talk of switching—why, thine arm, man, is but like a spindle compared to mine.—But hark, I hear old Adam Woodcock hollowing to his hawk—Come along, man, we will have a merry afternoon, and go jollily to my father's in spite of the peat-smoke and usquebaugh to boot. Maybe we may put you into some honest way of winning your bread, though it's hard to come by in these broken times."

The unfortunate page made no answer, nor did he withdraw his hands from his face, and Fisher continued in what he imagined a suitable tone of comfort.

"Why, man, when you were my Lady's minion, men held you proud, and some thought you a Papist, and I wot not what; and so, now that you have no one to bear you out, you must be companionable and hearty, and wait on the minister's examinations, and put these things out of folk's head; and if he says you are in fault, you must joust, your head to the stream; and if a gentleman, or a gentleman's gentleman, give you a rough word, or a light blow, you must only say, thank you for dusting my doublet, or the like, as I have done by you.—But hark to Woodcock's whistle again. Come, and I will teach you all the trick on't as we go on."

"I thank you," said Roland Græme, endeavouring to assume an air of indifference and of superiority; "but I have another path before me, and were it otherwise, I could not tread in yours."

"Very true, Master Roland," replied the clown; "and every man knows his own matters best, and so I will not keep you from the path, as you say. Give us a grip of your hand, man, for auld lang syne.—What I not clap palms ere we part?—well, so be it—a wilful man will have his way, and so farewell, and the blessing of the morning to you."

"Good-morrow—good-morrow," said Roland, hastily; and the clown walked lightly off, whistling as he went, and glad, apparently, to be rid of an acquaintance, whose claims might be troublesome, and who had no longer the means to be serviceable to him.

Roland Græme compelled himself to walk on while they were within sight of each other, that his former intimate might not augur any vacillation of purpose, or uncertainty of object, from his remaining on the same spot; but the effort was a painful one. He seemed stunned, as it were, and giddy; the earth on which he stood felt as if unsound, and quaking under his feet like the surface of a bog; and he had once or twice nearly fallen, though the path he trode was of firm greenward. He kept resolutely moving forward, in spite of the internal agitation to which these symptoms belonged, until the distant form of his acquaintance disappeared behind the slope of a hill, when his heart failed at once; and, sitting down on the turf, remote from human ken, he gave way to the natural expressions of wounded pride, grief, and fear, and wept with unrestrained profusion and unqualified bitterness.

When the first violent paroxysm of his feelings

had subsided, the deserted and friendless youth felt that mental relief which usually follows such discharges of sorrow. The tears continued to chase each other down his cheeks, but they were no longer accompanied by the same sense of desolation; an afflicting yet milder sentiment was awakened in his mind, by the recollection of his benefactress, of his unwearied kindness which had attached her to him, in spite of many acts of provoking petulance, now recollected as offences of a deep dye, which had protected him against the machinations of others, as well as against the consequences of his own follies, and would have continued to do so, had not the excess of his presumption compelled her to withdraw her protection.

"Whatever indignity I have borne," he said, "has been the just reward of my own ingratitude. And have I done well to accept the hospitality, the more than maternal kindness, of my protectress, yet to detain from her the knowledge of my religion!—but she shall know that a Catholic has as much gratitude as a Puritan—that I have been thoughtless, but not wicked—that in my wildest moments I have loved, respected, and honoured her—and that the orphan boy might indeed be heedless, but was never ungrateful!"

He turned, as these thoughts passed through his mind, and began hastily to retrace his footsteps towards the castle. But he checked the first eagerness of his repentant haste, when he reflected on the scorn and contempt with which the family were likely to see the return of the fugitive, humbled, as they must necessarily suppose him, into a supplicant, who requested pardon for his fault, and permission to return to his service. He slackened his pace, but he stood not still.

"I care not," he resolutely determined; "let them wink, point, nod, sneer, speak of the conceit which is humbled, of the pride which has had a fall—I care not; it is a penance due to my folly, and I will endure it with patience. But if she also, my benefactress, if she also should think me sordid and weak-spirited enough to beg, not for her pardon alone, but for a renewal of the advantages which I derived from her favour—her suspicion of my meanness I cannot—I will not brook."

He stood still, and his pride rallying with constitutional obstinacy against his more just feeling, urged that he would incur the scorn of the Lady of Avenel, rather than obtain her favour, by following the course which the first ardour of his repentant feelings had dictated to him.

"If I had but some plausible pretext," he thought, "some ostensible reason for my return, some excuse to allege which might shew I came not as a degraded supplicant, or a discarded menial, I might go thither—but as I am, I cannot—my heart would leap from its place and burst."

As these thoughts swept through his mind, something passed in the air so near him as to dazzle his eyes, and almost to brush the plume in his cap. He looked up—it was the favourite falcon of Sir Halbert, which, flying around his head, seemed to claim his attention, as that of a well-known friend. Roland extended his arm, and gave the accustomed whoop, and the falcon instantly settled on his wrist, and began to preme itself, glancing at the youth from time to time an acute and brilliant beam of its hazel eye, which seemed to ask why he caressed it not with his usual fondness.

"Ah, Diamond!" he said, as if the bird understood him, "thou and I must be strangers henceforward. Many a gallant stoop have I seen thee make, and many a brave heron strikes down; but that is all gone and over, and there is no hawking more for me!"

"And why not, Master Roland," said Adam Woodcock the falconer, who came at that instant from behind a few alder bushes which had concealed him from view, "why should there be no more hawking for you? Why, man, what were our life without our sports?—thou know'st the jolly old song—

"And rather would Allan in dungeon lie,
Than live at large where the falcon cannot fly;
And Allan would rather lie in Sexton's pound,
Than live where he follow'd not the merry hawk and hound."

The voice of the falconer was hearty and friendly, and the tone in which he half-sung half-recited his rude ballad, implied honest frankness and cordiality. But remembrance of their quarrel, and its consequences, embarrassed Roland, and prevented his reply. The falconer saw his hesitation, and guessed the cause.

"What now," said he, "Master Roland? do you, who are half an Englishman, think that I, who am a whole one, would keep up anger against you, and you in distress? That were like some of the Scots, (my master's reverence always exerted,) who can be fair and false, and wait their time, and keep their mind, as they say, to themselves, and touch pot and flagon with you, and hunt and hawk with you, and, after all, when time serves, pay off some old feud with the point of the dagger. Canny Yorkshire has no memory for such old sores. Why, man, an you had hit me a rough blow, maybe I would rather have taken it from you, than a rough word from another; for you have a good notion of falconry, though you stand up for washing the meat for the eyeses. So give us your hand, man, and bear no malice."

Roland, though he felt his proud blood rebel at the familiarity of honest Adam's address, could not resist its downright frankness. Covering his face with the one hand, he held out the other to the falconer, and returned with readiness his friendly grasp.

"Why, this is hearty now," said Woodcock; "I always said you had a kind heart, though you have a spice of the devil in your disposition, that is certain. I came this way with the falcon on purpose to find you, and you half-bred lubbers told me which way you took flight. You ever thought too much of that kestrel-kite, Master Roland, and he knows nought of sport after all, but what he caught from you. I saw how it had been betwixt you, and I sent him out of my company with a wamion—I would rather have a riffer on my perch than a false knave at my elbow—and now, Master Roland, tell me what way wing ye!"

"That is as God pleases," replied the page, with a sigh which he could not suppress.

"Nay, man! never droop a feather for being cast off," said the falconer; "who knows but you may soar the better and fairer flight for all this yet!—Look at Diamond there, 'tis a noble bird, and shews gallantly with his hood, and bells, and jesses; but there is many a wild falcon in Norway that would not change properties with him—And that is what I would say of you. You are no longer my Lady's

page, and you will not clothe so fair, or feed so well, or sleep so soft, or shew so gallant—What of all that? if you are not her page, you are your own man, and may go where you will, without minding whoop or whistle. The worst is the loss of the sport, but who knows what you may come to? They say that Sir Halbert himself, I speak with reverence, was once glad to be the Abbot's forester, and now he has hounds and hawks of his own, and Adam Woodcock for a falconer to the boots?"

"You are right, and say well, Adam," answered the youth, the blood mantling in his cheeks, "the falcon will soar higher without his bells than with them, though the bells be made of silver."

"That is cheerily spoken," replied the falconer; "and whither now?"

"I thought of going to the Abbey of Kennaquhair," answered Roland Graeme, "to ask the counsel of Father Ambrose."

"And joy go with you," said the falconer, "though it is likely you may find the old monks in some sorrow; they say the commons are threatening to turn them out of their cells, and make a devil's mass of it in the old church, thinking they have forborne that sport too long; and truth I am clear of the same opinion."

"Then will Father Ambrose be the better of having a friend beside him!" said the page, manfully.

"Ay, but, my young fearought," replied the falconer, "the friend will scarce be the better of being beside Father Ambrose—he may come by the redder's lick, and that is over the worst of the battle."

"I care not for that," said the page, "the dread of a lick should not hold me back; but I fear I may bring trouble between the brothers by visiting Father Ambrose. I will tarry to-night at Saint Cutbert's cell, where the old priest will give me a night's shelter; and I will send to Father Ambrose to ask his advice before I go down to the convent."

"By Our Lady," said the falconer, "and that is a likely plan—and now," he continued, exchanging his frankness of manner for a sort of awkward embarrassment, as if he had somewhat to say that he had not ready means to bring out—"and now, you wot well that I wear a pouch for my hawk's meat,¹ and so forth; but wot you what it is lined with, Master Roland?"

"With leather, to be sure," replied Roland, somewhat surprised at the hesitation with which Adam Woodcock asked a question apparently so simple.

"With leather, lad?" said Woodcock; "ay and with silver to the boot of that. See here," he said, shewing a secret slit in the lining of his bag of office—"here they are, thirty good Harry groats as ever were struck in bluff old Hall's time, and ten of them are right heartily at your service, and now the murder is out."

Roland's first idea was to refuse his assistance; but he recollected the vows of humility which he had just taken upon him, and it occurred that this was the opportunity to put his new-formed resolution to the test. Assuming a strong command

¹ This same bag, like every thing belonging to falconry, was esteemed an honourable distinction, and worn off by the nobility and gentry. One of the Bonhiverses of Camerthman was called *Sir John with the red bag*, because it was his wont to wear his hawking pouch covered with satin of that colour.

of himself, he answered Adam Woodcock with as much frankness as his nature permitted him to wear, in doing what was so contrary to his inclinations, that he accepted thankfully of his kind offer, while, to soothe his own reviving pride, he could not help adding, "he hoped soon to requite the obligation."

"That as you list—that as you list, young man," said the falconer, with glee, counting out and delivering to his young friend the supply he had so generously offered, and then adding, with great cheerfulness,—"Now you may go through the world; for he that can back a horse, wind a horn, hollow a greyhound, fly a hawk, and play at sword and buckler, with a whole pair of shoes, a green jacket, and ten lily-white groats in his pouch, may bid Father Care hang himself in his own jesses. Farewell, and God be with you!"

So saying, and as if desirous to avoid the thought of his companion, he turned hastily round, and left Roland Graine to pursue his journey alone.

CHAPTER VIII.

The sacred tapers' lights are gone,
 Their flames have clad the altar stone,
 The holy image is o'erthrown,
 The bell has ceased to toll,
 The long ribb'd staves are burst and shrunk,
 The holy shrines to ruin sunk,
 Departed is the pious monk,
 God's blessing on his soul!

Rediviva.

THE cell of Saint Cuthbert, as it was called, marked, or was supposed to mark, one of those resting places, which that venerable saint was pleased to assign to his monks, when his convent, being driven from Lindisfern by the Danes, became a peripatetic society of religionists, and bearing their patron's body on their shoulders, transported him from place to place through Scotland and the borders of England, until he was pleased at length to spare them the pain of carrying him farther, and to choose his ultimate place of rest in the lordly towers of Durham. The odour of his sanctity remained behind him at each place where he had granted the monks a transient respite from their labours; and proud were those who could assign, as his temporary resting-place, any spot within their vicinity. There were few cells more celebrated and honoured than that of Saint Cuthbert, to which Roland Graine now bent his way, situated considerably to the north-west of the great Abbey of Kennaquhair, on which it was dependent. In the neighbourhood were some of those recommendations which weighed with the experienced priesthood of Rome, in choosing their sites for places of adoration.

There was a well, possessed of some medicinal qualities, which, of course, claimed the saint for its guardian and patron, and occasionally procured some advantage to the recluse who inhabited his cell; since none could reasonably expect to benefit by the fountain who did not extend their bounty to the saint's chaplain. A few rods of fertile land afforded the monk his plot of garden ground; an eminence well clothed with trees rose behind the cell, and sheltered it from the north and the east, while the front, opening to the south-west, looked up a wild but pleasant valley, down which wan-

dered a lively brook, which battled with every stone that interrupted its passage.

The cell itself was rather plainly than rudely constructed—a low Gothic building with two small apartments, one of which served the priest for his dwelling-place, the other for his chapel. As there were few of the secular clergy who durst venture to reside so near the Border, the assistance of this monk in spiritual affairs had not been useless to the community, while the Catholic religion retained the ascendancy; as he could marry, christen, and administer the other sacraments of the Roman church. Of late, however, as the Protestant doctrines gained ground, he had found it convenient to live in close retirement, and to avoid, as much as possible, drawing upon himself observation or animadversion. The appearance of his habitation, however, when Roland Graine came before it in the close of the evening, plainly shewed that his caution had been finally ineffectual.

The page's first movement was to knock at the door, when he observed, to his surprise, that it was open, not from being left unlatched, but because, beat off its upper hinge, it was only fastened to the door-post by the lower, and could therefore no longer perform its functions. Somewhat alarmed at this, and receiving no answer when he knocked and called, Roland began to look more at leisure upon the exterior of the little dwelling before he ventured to enter it. The flowers, which had been trained with care against the walls, seemed to have been recently torn down, and trailed their dishonoured garlands on the earth; the latticed window was broken and dashed in. The garden, which the monk had maintained by his constant labour in the highest order and beauty, bore marks of having been lately trod down and destroyed by the hoofs of animals, and the feet of men.

The sainted spring had not escaped. It was wont to rise beneath a canopy of ribbed arches, with which the devotion of elder times had secured and protected its healing waters. These arches were now almost entirely demolished, and the stones of which they were built were tumbled into the well, as if for the purpose of choking up and destroying the fountain, which, as it had shared in other days the honour of the saint, was, in the present, doomed to partake his unpopularity. Part of the roof had been pulled down from the house itself, and an attempt had been made with crows and levers upon one of the angles, by which several large corner-stones had been forced out of their place; but the solidity of ancient masonry had proved too great for the time or patience of the assailants, and they had relinquished their task of destruction. Such dilapidated buildings, after the lapse of years, during which nature has gradually covered the effects of violence with creeping plants, and with weather-stains, exhibit, amid their decay, a melancholy beauty. But when the visible effects of violence appear raw and recent, there is no feeling to mitigate the sense of devastation with which they impress the spectators; and such was now the scene on which the youthful page gazed, with the painful feelings it was qualified to excite.

When his first momentary surprise was over, Roland Graine was at no loss to conjecture the cause of these ravages. The destruction of the Popish edifices did not take place at once throughout Scotland, but at different times, and according

to the spirit which actuated the reformed clergy; some of whom instigated their hearers to these acts of demolition, and others, with better taste and feeling, endeavoured to protect the ancient shrines, while they desired to see them purified from the objects which and attracted idolatrous devotion. From time to time therefore, the populace of the Scottish towns and villages, when instigated either by their own feelings of abhorrence for Popish superstition, or by the doctrines of the more zealous preachers, resumed the work of destruction, and exercised it upon some sequestered church, chapel, or cell, which had escaped the first burst of their indignation against the religion of Rome. In many places, the vices of the Catholic clergy, arising out of the wealth and the corruption of that tremendous hierarchy, furnished too good an apology for wreaking vengeance upon the splendid edifices which they inhabited; and of this an old Scottish historian gives a remarkable instance.

"Why mourn ye," said an aged matron, seeing the discontent of some of the citizens, while a stately convent was burnt by the multitude,—"why mourn ye for its destruction! If you knew half the flagitious wickedness which has been perpetrated within that house, you would rather bless the divine judgment, which permits not even the senseless walls that screened such profligacy, any longer to cumber Christian ground."

But although, in many instances, the destruction of the Roman Catholic buildings might be, in the matron's way of judging, an act of justice, and in others an act of policy, there is no doubt that the humour of demolishing monuments of ancient piety and munificence, and that in a poor country like Scotland, where there was no chance of their being replaced, was both useless, mischievous, and barbarous.

In the present instance, the unpretending and quiet seclusion of the monk of St Cuthbert's had hitherto saved him from the general wreck; but it would seem ruin had now at length reached him. Anxious to discover if he had at least escaped personal harm, Roland Græme entered the half-ruined cell.

The interior of the building was in a state which fully justified the opinion he had formed from its external injuries. The few rude utensils of the solitary's hut were broken down, and lay scattered on the floor, where it seemed as if a fire had been made with some of the fragments to destroy the rest of his property, and to consume, in particular, the rude old image of Saint Cuthbert, in its episcopal habit, which lay on the hearth like Dagon of yore, shattered with the axe and scorched with the flames, but only partially destroyed. In the little apartment which served as a chapel, the altar was overthrown, and the four huge stones of which it had been once composed lay scattered around the floor. The large stone crucifix which occupied the niche behind the altar, and fronted the supplicant while he said his devotion there, had been pulled down, and dashed by its own weight into three fragments. There were marks of sledge-hammers on each of these; yet the image had been saved from utter demolition by the size and strength of the remaining fragments, which, though much injured, retained enough of the original sculpture to show what it had been intended to represent.¹

¹ See Note B. Cell of Saint Cuthbert.

Roland Græme, secretly nursed in the tombs of Rome, saw with horror the profanation of the most sacred emblem, according to his creed, of our holy religion.

"It is the badge of our redemption," he said, "which the felons have dared to violate—would to God my weak strength were able to replace it—my humble strength, to atone for the sacrilege!"

He stooped to the task he first meditated, and with a sudden, and to himself almost an incredible exertion of power, he lifted up the one extremity of the lower shaft of the cross, and rested it upon the edge of the large stone which served for its pedestal. Encouraged by this success, he applied his force to the other extremity, and, to his own astonishment, succeeded so far as to erect the lower end of the limb into the socket, out of which it had been forced, and to place this fragment of the image upright.

While he was employed in this labour, or rather at the very moment when he had accomplished the elevation of the fragment, a voice, in thrilling and well known accents, spoke behind him these words:—"Well done, thou good and faithful servant! Thus would I again meet the child of my love—the hope of my aged eyes."

Roland turned round in astonishment, and the tall commanding form of Magdalen Græme stood beside him. She was arrayed in a sort of loose habit, in form like that worn by penitents in Catholic countries, but black in colour, and approaching as near to a pilgrim's cloak as it was safe to wear in a country where the suspicion of Catholic devotion in many places endangered the safety of those who were suspected of attachment to the ancient faith. Roland Græme threw himself at her feet. She raised and embraced him, with affection indeed, but not unmingled with gravity which amounted almost to sternness.

"Thou hast kept well," she said, "the bird in thy bosom." As a boy, as a youth, thou hast held fast thy faith amongst heretics—thou hast kept thy secret and mine own amongst thine enemies. I wept when I parted from you—I who seldom weep, then shed tears, less for thy death than for thy spiritual danger—I dared not even see thee to bid thee a last farewell—my grief, my swelling grief, had betrayed me to these heretics. But thou hast been faithful—down, down on thy knees before the holy sign, which evil men injure and blaspheme; down, and praise saints and angels for the grace they have done thee, in preserving thee from the leprous plague which cleaves to the house in which thou wert nurtured!"

"If, my mother—so I must ever call you," replied Græme,—"if I am returned such as thou wouldst wish me, thou must thank the care of the pious father Ambrose, whose instructions confirmed your early precepts, and taught me at once to be faithful and to be silent."

"Be he blessed for it!" said she, "blessed in the cell and in the field, in the pulpit and at the altar—the saints rain blessings on him!—they are just, and employ his pious care to counteract the evils which his detested brother works against the realm and the church,—but he knew not of thy lineage!"

² An expression used by Sir Ralph Percy, when, in the battle of Hedgely-moor in 1464, when flying, to express his having preserved unstained his fidelity to the House of Lancaster.

"I could not myself tell him that," answered Roland. "I knew but darkly from your words, that Sir Halbert Glendinning holds mine inheritance, and that I am of blood as noble as runs in the veins of any Scottish Baron—these are things not to be forgotten, but for the explanation I must now look to you."

"And when time suits, thou shalt not look for it in vain. But men say, my son, that thou art bold and sudden; and those who bear such tempers are not lightly to be trusted with what will strongly move them."

"Say rather, my mother," returned Roland Græme, "that I am laggard and cold-blooded—what patience or endurance can you require of which he is not capable, who for years has heard his religion ridiculed and insulted, yet failed to plunge his dagger into the blasphemer's bosom?"

"Be contented, my child," replied Magdalen Græme; "the time, which then and even now demands patience, will soon ripen to that of effort and action—great events are on the wing, and thou—thou shalt have thy share in advancing them. Thou hast relinquished the service of the Lady of Avenel?"

"I have been dismissed from it, my mother—I have lived to be dismissed, as if I were the meanest of the train."

"It is the better, my child," replied she; "thy mind will be the more hardened to undertake that which must be performed."

"Let it be nothing, then, against the Lady of Avenel," said the priest, "as thy look and words seem to imply. I have eaten her bread—I have experienced her favour—I will neither injure nor betray her."

"Of that hereafter, my son," said she; "but learn this, that it is not for thee to capitulate in thy duty, and to say this will I do, and that will I leave undone—No, Roland! God and man will no longer abide the wickedness of this generation. Seest thou these fragments—knowest thou what they represent?—and canst thou think it is for thee to make distinctions amongst a race so accursed by Heaven, that they renounce, violate, blaspheme, and destroy, whatsoever we are commanded to believe in, whatsoever we are commanded to reverence?"

As she spoke, she bent her head towards the broken image, with a countenance in which strong resentment and zeal were mingled with an expression of ecstatic devotion; she raised her left hand aloft as in the act of making a vow, and thus proceeded: "Bear witness for me, blessed symbol of our salvation, bear witness, holy saint, within whose violated temple we stand, that as it is not for vengeance of my own that my chate pursues these people, so neither, for any favour or earthly affection towards any amongst them, will I withdraw my hand from the plough, when it shall pass through the devoted furrow! Bear witness, holy saint, once thyself a wanderer and fugitive as we are now—bear witness, Mother of Mercy, Queen of Heaven—bear witness, saints and angels!"

In this high strain of enthusiasm, she stood, raising her eyes through the fractured roof of the vault to the stars which now began to twinkle through the pale twilight, while the long gray tresses which hung down over her shoulders waved

in the night-breeze, which the chasm and fractured windows admitted freely.

Roland Græme was too much awed by early habits, as well as by the mysterious import of her words, to ask for farther explanation of the purpose she obscurely hinted at. Nor did she farther press him on the subject; for, having concluded her prayer or obtestation, by clasping her hands together with solemnity, and then signing herself with the cross, she again addressed her grandson, in a tone more adapted to the ordinary business of life.

"Thou must hence," she said, "Roland, thou must hence, but not till morning—And now, how wilt thou shift for thy night's quarters?—thou hast been more softly bred than when we were companions in the misty hills of Cumberland and Liddesdale."

"I have at least preserved, my good mother, the habits which I then learned—can lie hard, feed sparingly, and think it no hardship. Since I was a wanderer with thee on the hills, I have been a hunter, and fisher, and fowler, and each of these is accustomed to sleep freely in a worse shelter than sacrifice has left us here."

"Than sacrifice has left us here!" said the matron, repeating his words, and pausing on them. "Most true, my son; and God's faithful children are now worst sheltered, when they lodge in God's own house and the demesne of his blessed saints. We shall sleep cold here, under the night-wind, which whistles through the breaches which heresy has made. They shall lie warmer who made them—ay, and through a long hereafter."

Notwithstanding the wild and singular expressions of this female, she appeared to retain towards Roland Græme, in a strong degree, that affectionate and sedulous love which women bear to their nurslings, and the children dependent on their care. It seemed as if she would not permit him to do aught for himself which in former days her attention had been used to do for him, and that she considered the tall stripling before her as being equally dependent on her careful attention as when he was the orphan child, who had owed all to her affectionate solicitude.

"What hast thou to eat now?" she said, as, leaving the chapel, they went into the deserted habitation of the priest; "or what means of kindling a fire, to defend thee from this raw and inclement air? Poor child! thou hast made slight provision for a long journey; nor hast thou skill to help thyself by it, when means are scanty. But Our Lady has placed by thy side one to whom want, in all its forms, is as familiar as plenty and splendour have formerly been. And with want, Roland, come the arts of which she is the inventor."

With an active and officious diligence, which strangely contrasted with her late abstracted and high tone of Catholic devotion, she set about her domestic arrangements for the evening. A pouch, which was hidden under her garment, produced a flint and steel, and from the scattered fragments around (those pertaining to the image of Saint Cuthbert scrupulously excepted) she obtained splinters sufficient to raise a sparkling and cheerful fire on the hearth of the deserted cell.

"And now," she said, "for needful food."

"Think not of it, mother," said Roland, "unless you yourself feel hunger. It is a little thing for me to endure a night's abstinence, and a small

argument for the necessary transgression of the rules of the Church, upon which I was compelled during my stay in the castle."

"Hunger for myself!" answered the matron—"Know, youth, that a mother knows not hunger till that of her child is satisfied." And with affectionate inconsistency, totally different from her usual manner, she added, "Roland, you must not fast; you have dispensation; you are young, and to youth food and sleep are necessities not to be dispensed with. Husband your strength, my child,—your sovereign, your religion, your country, require it. Let age macerate by fast and vigil a body which can only suffer; let youth, in these active times, nourish the limbs and the strength which action requires."

While she thus spoke, the scip, which had produced the means of striking fire, furnished provision for a meal; of which she herself scarce partook, but anxiously watched her charge, taking a pleasure, resembling that of an epicure, in each morsel which he swallowed with a youthful appetite which abstinence had rendered unusually sharp. Roland readily obeyed her recommendations, and ate the food which she so affectionately and earnestly placed before him. But she shook her head when invited by him in return to partake of the refreshment her own cares had furnished; and when his solicitude became more pressing, she refused him in a lazier tone of rejection.

"Young man," she said, "you know not to whom or of what you speak. They to whom Heaven declares its purpose must merit its communication by mortifying the senses; they have that within which requires not the superfluity of earthly nutriment, which is necessary to those who are without the sphere of the Vision. To them the watch spent in prayer is a refreshing slumber, and the sense of doing the will of Heaven is a richer banquet than the tables of monarchs can spread before them?—But do thou sleep soft, my son," she said, relapsing from the tone of fanaticism into that of maternal affection and tenderness; "do thou sleep sound while life is but young with thee, and the cares of the day can be dispensed in the slumbers of the evening. Different is thy duty and mine, and as different the means by which we must qualify and strengthen ourselves to perform it. From thee is demanded strength of body—from me, strength of soul."

When she thus spoke, she prepared with ready address a pallet-couch, composed partly of the dried leaves which had once furnished a bed to the solitary, and the guests who occasionally received his hospitality, and which, neglected by the destroyers of his humble cell, had remained little disturbed in the corner allotted for them. To these her care added some of the vestures which lay torn and scattered on the floor. With a zealous hand she selected all such as appeared to have made any part of the sacerdotal vestments, laying them aside as sacred from ordinary purposes, and with the rest she made, with dexterous promptness, such a bed as a weary man might willingly stretch himself on; and during the time she was preparing it, rejected, even with acrimony, any attempt which the youth made to assist her, or any entreaty which he urged that she would accept of the place of rest for her own use. "Sleep thou," said she, "Roland Græme, sleep thou—the persecuted, the

disinherited orphan—the son of an ill-fated mother—sleep thou! I go to pray in the chapel beside thee."

The manner was too enthusiastically earnest, too obstinately firm, to permit Roland Græme to dispute her will any farther. Yet he felt some shame in giving way to it. It seemed as if she had forgotten the years that had passed away since their parting; and expected to meet, in the tall, indulged, and wilful youth, whom she had recovered, the passive obedience of the child whom she had left in the Castle of Avenel. This did not fail to hurt her grandson's characteristic and constitutional pride. He obeyed, indeed, awed into submission by the sudden recurrence of former subordination, and by feelings of affection and gratitude. Still, however, he felt the yoke.

"Have I relinquished the hawk and the hound," he said, "to become the pupil of her pleasure, as if I were still a child!—I, whom even my envious mates allowed to be superior in those exercises which they took most pains to acquire, and which came to me naturally, as if a knowledge of them had been my birthright! This may not and must not be. I will be no reclaimed sparrow-hawk, who is carried hooded on a woman's wrist, and has his quarry only shewn to him when his eyes are uncovered for his flight. I will know her purpose ere it is proposed to me to aid it."

These, and other thoughts, streamed through the mind of Roland Græme; and although wearied with the fatigues of the day, it was long ere he could compose himself to rest.

CHAPTER IX.

Kneel with me—I swear it—'tis not in words I trust,
Save when they're forced with an appeal to Heaven.

Old Play.

AFTER passing the night in that sound sleep for which agitation and fatigue had prepared him, Roland was awakened by the fresh morning air and by the beams of the rising sun. His first feeling was that of surprise; for, instead of looking forth from a turret window on the waters of the Lake of Avenel, which was the prospect his former apartment afforded, an unlatticed aperture gave him the view of the demolished garden of the banished anchorite. He sat up on his couch of leaves, and arranged in his memory, not without wonder, the singular events of the preceding day, which appeared the more surprising the more he considered them. He had lost the protectress of his youth, and, in the same day, he had recovered the guide and guardian of his childhood. The former deprivation he felt ought to be matter of unceasing regret, and it seemed as if the latter could hardly be the subject of unmixed self-congratulation. He remembered this person, who had stood to him in the relation of a mother, as equally affectionate in her attention, and absolute in her authority. A singular mixture of love and fear attended upon his early remembrances as they were connected with her; and the fear that she might desire to resume the same absolute control over his motions—a fear which her conduct of yesterday did not tend much to dissipate—weighed heavily against the joy of this second meeting.

"She cannot mean," said his rising pride, "to lead and direct me as a pupil, when I am at the age of judging of my own actions!—this she cannot mean, or, meaning it, will feel herself strangely deceived."

A sense of gratitude towards the person against whom his heart thus rebelled, checked his course of feeling. He resisted the thoughts which involuntarily arose in his mind, as he would have resisted an actual instigation of the foul fiend; and, to aid him in his struggle, he felt for his beads. But, in his hasty departure from the Castle of Avenel, he had forgotten and left them behind him.

"His is yet worse," he said; "but two things I learned of her under the most deadly charge of secrecy—to tell my beads, and to conceal that I did so; and I have kept my word till now; and when she shall ask me for the rosary, I must say I have forgotten it!" Do I deserve she should believe me when I say I have kept the secret of my faith, when I set so light by its symbol?"

He paced the floor in anxious agitation. In fact, his attachment to his faith was of a nature very different from that which animated the enthusiastic matron, but which, notwithstanding, it would have been his last thought to relinquish.

The early charges impressed on him by his grandmother, had been instilled into a mind and memory of a character peculiarly tenacious. Child as he was, he was proud of the confidence reposed in his discretion, and resolved to shew that it had not been rashly intrusted to him. At the same time, his resolution was no more than that of a child, and must, necessarily, have gradually faded away under the operation both of precept and example, during his residence at the Castle of Avenel, but for the exhortations of Father Ambrose, who, in his lay estate, had been called Edward Glendinning. This zealous monk had been apprized, by an unsigned letter placed in his hand by a pilgrim, that a child educated in the Catholic faith was now in the Castle of Avenel, perilously situated, (so was the scroll expressed,) as over the three children who were cast into the fiery furnace of persecution. The letter threw upon Father Ambrose the guilt, should this solitary lamb, unwillingly left within the demesnes of the prowling wolf, become his final prey. There needed no farther exhortation to the monk than the idea that a soul might be endangered, and that a Catholic might become an apostate; and he made his visits more frequent than usual to the Castle of Avenel, lest, through want of the private encouragement and instruction which he always found some opportunity of dispensing, the church should lose a proselyte, and, according to the Romish creed, the devil acquire a soul.

Still these interviews were rare; and though they encouraged the solitary boy to keep his secret and hold fast his religion, they were neither frequent nor long enough to inspire him with any thing beyond a blind attachment to the observance which the priest recommended. He adhered to the forms of his religion rather because he felt it would be dishonourable to change that of his fathers, than from any rational conviction or sincere belief of its mysterious doctrines. It was a principal part of the distinction which, in his own opinion, singled him out from those with whom he lived, and gave him an additional, though an internal and concealed

reason, for contemning those of the household who shewed an undisguised dislike of him, and for hardening himself against the instructions of the chaplain, Henry Warden.

"The fanatic preacher," he thought within himself, during some one of the chaplain's frequent discourses against the Church of Rome, "he little knows whose ears are receiving his profane doctrine, and with what contempt and abhorrence they hear his blasphemies against the holy religion by which kings have been crowned, and for which martyrs have died!"

But in such proud feelings of defiance of heresy, as it was termed, and of its professors, which associated the Catholic religion with a sense of generous independence, and that of the Protestants with the subjugation of his mind and temper to the direction of Mr Warden, began and ended the faith of Roland Greeme, who, independently of the pride of singularity, sought not to understand, and had no one to expound to him, the peculiarities of the tenets which he professed. His regret, therefore, at missing the rosary which had been conveyed to him through the hands of Father Ambrose, was rather the shame of a soldier who has dropped his cockade, or badge of service, than that of a zealous votary who had forgotten a visible symbol of his religion.

His thoughts on the subject, however, were mortifying, and the more so from apprehension that his negligence must reach the ears of his relative. He felt it could be no one but her who had secretly transmitted these beads to Father Ambrose for his use, and that his carelessness was but an indifferent requital of her kindness.

"Nor will she omit to ask me about them," said he to himself; "for hers is a zeal which age cannot quell; and if she has not quitted her wont, my answer will not fail to incense her."

While he thus communed with himself, Magdalen Greeme, entered the apartment. "The blessing of the morning on your youthful head, my son," she said, with a solemnity of expression which thrilled the youth to the heart, so sad and earnest did the benediction flow from her lips, in a tone where devotion was blended with affection. "And thou hast started thus early from thy couch to catch the first breath of the dawn! But it is not well, my Roland. Enjoy slumber while thou canst; the time is not far behind when the waking eye must be thy portion, as well as mine."

She uttered these words with an affectionate and anxious tone, which shewed, that devotional as were the habitual exercises of her mind, the thoughts of her nursling yet bound her to earth with the cords of human affection and passion.

But she abode not long in a mood which she probably regarded as a momentary dereliction of her imaginary high calling—"Come," she said, "youth, up and be doing—It is time that we leave this place."

"And whither do we go?" said the young man; "or what is the object of our journey?"

The matron stepped back, and gazed on him with surprise, not unmingled with displeasure.

"To what purpose such a question?" she said; "is it not enough that I lead the way! Hast thou lived with heretics till thou hast learned to instal the vanity of thine own private judgment in place of due honour and obedience?"

"The time," thought Roland Græme within himself, "is already come, when I must establish my freedom, or be a willing thrall for ever—I feel that I must speedily look to it."

She instantly fulfilled his foreboding, by recurring to the theme by which her thoughts seemed most constantly engrossed, although, when she pleased, no one could so perfectly disguise her religion.

"Thy beads, my son—hast thou told thy beads?"

Roland Græme coloured high; he felt the storm was approaching, but scorned to avert it by a falsehood.

"I have forgotten my rosary," he said, "at the Castle of Avenel."

"Forgotten thy rosary!" she exclaimed; "false both to religion and to natural duty, hast thou lost what was sent so far, and at such risk, a token of the truest affection, that should have been, every bead of it, as dear to thee as thine eyeballs?"

"I am grieved it should have so chanced, mother," replied the youth, "and much did I value the token, as coming from you. For what remains, I trust to win gold enough, when I push my way in the world; and till then, beads of black oak, or a rosary of nuts, must serve the turn."

"Hear him!" said his grandmother; "young as he is, he hath learned already the lessons of the devil's school! The rosary, consecrated by the Holy Father himself, and sanctified by his blessing, is but a few knobs of gold, whose value may be replaced by the wages of his profane labour, and whose virtue may be supplied by a string of hazel nuts!—This is heresy—So Henry Warden, the wolf who ravages the flock of the Shepherd, hath taught thee to speak and to think."

"Mother," said Roland Græme, "I am no heretic; I believe and I pray according to the rules of our church—This misfortune I regret, but I cannot amend it."

"Thou canst repent it, though," replied his spiritual directress, "repent it in dust and ashes, atone for it by fasting, prayer, and penance, instead of looking on me with a countenance as light as if thou hadst lost but a button from thy cap."

"Mother," said Roland, "be appeased; I will remember my fault in the next confession which I have space and opportunity to make, and will do whatever the priest may require of me in atonement. For the heaviest fault I can do no more. But, mother," he added, after a moment's pause, "let me not incur your farther displeasure, if I ask whither our journey is bound, and what is its object. I am no longer a child, but a man, and at my own disposal, with down upon my chin, and a sword by my side—I will go to the end of the world with you to do your pleasure; but I owe it to myself to inquire the purpose and direction of our travels."

"You owe it to yourself, ungrateful boy!" replied his relative, passion rapidly supplying the colour which age had long chased from her features,—"to yourself you owe nothing—you can owe nothing—to me you owe every thing—your life when an infant—your support while a child—the means of instruction, and the hopes of honour—and, sooner than thou shouldst abandon the noble cause to which I have devoted thee, would I see thee lie a corpse at my feet!"

Roland was alarmed at the vehement agitation with which she spoke, and which threatened to over-

power her aged frame; and he hastened to reply—"I forget nothing of what I owe to you, my dearest mother—shew me how my blood can testify my gratitude, and you shall judge if I spare it. But manifold obedience has in it as little merit as reason."

"Saints and angels!" replied Magdalen, "and do I hear these words from the child of my hopes, the nursing by whose bed I have kneeled, and for whose weal I have wearied every saint in heaven with prayers? Roland, by obedience only canst thou shew thy affection and thy gratitude. What avails it that you might perchance adopt the course I propose to thee, were it to be fully explained? Thou wouldst not then follow my command, but thine own judgment; thou wouldst not do the will of Heaven, communicated through thy best friend, to whom thou owest thine all; but thou wouldst observe the blinded dictates of thine own imperfect reason. Hear me, Roland! a lot calls thee—solicits thee—demands thee—the proudest to which man can be destined, and it uses the voice of thine earliest, thy best, thine only friend—Wilt thou resist it? Then go thy way—leave me here—my hopes on earth are gone and withered—I will kneel life down before yonder profaned altar, and when the raging heretics return, they shall dye it with the blood of a martyr."

"But, my dearest mother," said Roland Græme, whose early recollections of her violence were formidably renewed by these wild expressions of reckless passion, "I will not forsake you—I will abide with you—worlds shall not force me from your side—I will protect—I will defend you—I will live with you, and die for you!"

"One word, my son, were worth all these—say only, 'I will obey you.'"

"Doubt it not, mother," replied the youth, "I will, and that with all my heart; only—"

"Nay, I receive no qualifications of thy promise," said Magdalen Græme, catching at the word, "the obedience which I require is absolute; and a blessing on thee, thou darling memory of my beloved child, that thou hast power to make a promise so hard to human pride! Trust me well, that in the design in which thou dost embark, thou hast for thy partners the mighty and the valiant, the power of the church, and the pride of the noble. Succeed or fail, live or die, thy name shall be among those with whom success or failure is alike glorious, death or life alike desirable. Forward, then, forward! life is short, and our plan is laborious—Angels, saints, and the whole blessed host of heaven, have their eyes even now on this barren and blighted land of Scotland—What say I! on Scotland!—their eye is on us, Roland—on the frail woman, on the inexperienced youth, who, amidst the ruins which sacrilege hath made in the holy place, devote themselves to God's cause, and that of their lawful Sovereign. Amen, so be it! The blessed eyes of saints and martyrs, which see our resolve, shall witness the execution; or their ears, which hear our vow, shall hear our death-groan drawn in the sacred cause!"

While thus speaking, she held Roland Græme firmly with one hand, while she pointed upward with the other, to leave him, as it were, no means of protest against the obstination to which he was thus made a party. When she had finished her appeal to Heaven, she left him no leisure for far-

ther hesitation, or for asking any explanation of her purpose; but passing with the same ready transition as formerly, to the solicitous attentions of an anxious parent, overwhelmed him with questions concerning his residence in the Castle of Aveue, and the qualities and accomplishments he had acquired.

"It is well," she said, when she had exhausted her inquiries, "my gay goshawk hath been well trained, and will soar high; but those who bred him will have cause to fear as well as to wonder at his flight.—Let us now," she said, "to our morning meal, and care not though it be a scanty one. A few hours' walk will bring us to more friendly quarters."

They broke their fast accordingly, and such fragments as remained of their yesterday's provision, and immediately set out on their farther journey. Magdalen Græme led the way, with a firm and active step much beyond her years, and Roland Græme followed, pensive and anxious, and far from satisfied with the state of dependence to which he seemed again to be reduced.

"Am I for ever," he said to himself, "to be devoured with the desire of independence and free agency, and yet to be for ever led by on, circumstances, to follow the will of others?"

CHAPTER X.

She dwelt unnoted and alone,
Beside the springs of Dove;
A maid whom there was none to praise,
And very few to love.

WORDSWORTH

In the course of their journey the travellers spoke little to each other. Magdalen Græme chanted, from time to time, in a low voice, a part of some one of those beautiful old Latin hymns which belong to the Catholic service, muttered an Ave or a Credo, and so passed on, lost in devotional contemplation. The meditations of her grandson were more bent on mundane matters; and many a time, as a moor-fowl rose from the heath, and shot along the moor, uttering his bold crow of defiance, he thought of the jolly Adam Woodcock, and his trusty goshawk; or, as they passed a thicket where the low trees and bushes were intermingled with tall fern, furze, and broom, so as to form a thick and intricate cover, his dreams were of a roebuck and a brace of gazehounds. But frequently his mind returned to the benevolent and kind mistress whom he had left behind him, offended justly, and unconciled by any effort of his.

"My step would be lighter," he thought, "and so would my heart, could I but have returned to see her for one instant, and to say, Lady, the orphan boy was wild, but not ungrateful!"

Travelling in these divers moods, about the hour of noon they reached a small straggling village, in which, as usual, were seen one or two of the predominating towers, or peel houses, which, for reasons of defence elsewhere detailed, were at that time to be found in every Border hamlet. A brook flowed beside the village, and watered the valley in which it stood. There was also a mansion

at the end of the village, and a little way separated from it, much dilapidated, and in very bad order, but appearing to have been the abode of persons of some consideration. The situation was agreeable, being an angle formed by the stream, bearing three or four large sycamore trees, which were in full leaf, and served to relieve the dark appearance of the mansion, which was built of a deep red stone. The house itself was a large one, but was now obviously too big for the inmates; several windows were built up, especially those which opened from the lower story; others were blockaded in a less substantial manner. The court before the door, which had once been defended with a species of low outer-wall, now ruinous, was paved, but the stones were completely covered with long gray nettles, thistles, and other weeds, which, shooting up betwixt the flags, had displaced many of them from their level. Even matters demanding more peremptory attention had been left neglected, in a manner which argued sloth or poverty in the extreme. The stream, undermining a part of the bank near an angle of the ruinous wall, had brought it down, with a corner turret, the ruins of which lay in the bed of the river. The current, interrupted by the ruins which it had overthrown, and turned yet nearer to the site of the tower, had greatly enlarged the breach it had made, and was in the process of undermining the ground on which the house itself stood, unless it were speedily protected by sufficient bulwarks.

At this attracted Roland Græme's observation, as they approached the dwelling by a winding path, which gave them, at intervals, a view of it from different points.

"If we go to yonder house," he said to his mother, "I trust it is but for a short visit. It looks as if two rainy days from the north-west would send the whole into the brook."

"You see but with the eyes of the body," said the old woman; "God will defend his own, though it be forsaken and despised of men. Better to dwell on the sand, under his law, than fly to the rock of human trust."

As she thus spoke, they entered the court before the old mansion, and Roland could observe that the front of it had formerly been considerably ornamented with carved work, in the same dark-coloured freestone of which it was built. But all these ornaments had been broken down and destroyed, and only the shattered vestiges of niches and entablatures now strewed the place which they had once occupied. The larger entrance in front was walled up, but a little footpath, which, from its appearance, seemed to be rarely trodden, led to a small wicket, defended by a door well clenched with iron-headed nails, at which Magdalen Græme knocked three times, pausing betwixt each knock, until she heard an answering tap from within. At the last knock, the wicket was opened by a pale thin female, who said, "*Benedicti qui venient in nomine Domini.*" They entered, and the portress hastily shut behind them the wicket, and made fast the massive fastenings by which it was secured.

The female led the way through a narrow entrance, into a vestibule of some extent, paved with stone, and having benches of the same solid material ranged around. At the upper end was an oriel window, but some of the intervals formed by the stone shafts and mullions were blocked up, so that the apartment was very gloomy.

Here they stopped, and the mistress of the mansion, for such she was, embraced Magdalen Græme, and greeting her by the title of sister, kissed her, with much solemnity, on either side of the face.

"The blessing of Our Lady be upon you, my sister," were her next words; and they left no doubt upon Roland's mind respecting the religion of their hostess, even if he could have suspected his venerable and zealous guide of resting elsewhere than in the habitation of an orthodox Catholic. They spoke together a few words in private, during which he had leisure to remark more particularly the appearance of his grandmother's friend.

Her age might be betwixt fifty and sixty; her looks had a mixture of melancholy and unhappiness, that bordered on discontent, and obscured the remains of beauty which age had still left on her features. Her dress was of the plainest and most ordinary description, of a dark colour, and, like Magdalen Græme's, something approaching to a religious habit. Strict neatness and cleanliness of person, seemed to intimate, that if poor, she was not reduced to squalid or heart-broken distress, and that still she was sufficiently attached to life to retain a taste for its decencies, if not its elegancies. Her manner, as well as her features and appearance, argued an original condition and education far above the meanness of her present appearance. In short, the whole figure was such as to excite the idea, "That female must have had a history worth knowing." While Roland Græme was making this very reflection, the whispers of the two females ceased, and the mistress of the mansion, approaching him, looked on his face and person with much attention, and, as it seemed, some interest.

"This, then," she said, addressing his relative, "is the child of thine unhappy daughter, sister Magdalen; and him, the only shoot from your ancient tree, you are willing to devote to the Good Cause!"

"Yes, by the rood," answered Magdalen Græme, in her usual tone of resolved determination, "to the good cause I devote him, flesh and fell, sinew and limb, body and soul."

"Thou art a happy woman, sister Magdalen," answered her companion, "that, lifted so high above human affection and human feeling, thou canst bind such a victim to the horns of the altar. Had I been called to make such sacrifice—to plunge a youth so young and fair into the plots and bloodthirsty dealings of the time, not the patriarch Abraham, when he led Isaac up the mountain, would have rendered more melancholy obedience."

She then continued to look at Roland with a mournful aspect of compassion, until the intendment of her gaze occasioned his colour to rise, and he was about to move out of its influence, when he was stopped by his grandmother with one hand, while with the other she divided the hair upon his forehead, which was now crimson with bashfulness, while she added, with a mixture of proud affection and firm resolution,—"Ay, look at him well, my sister, for on a fairer face thine eye never rested. I too, when I first saw him, after a long separation, felt as the worldly feel, and was half-shaken in my purpose. But no wind can tear a leaf from the withered tree which has long been stripped of its foliage, and no mere human casualty can awaken the mortal feelings which have long slept in the calm of devotion."

While the old woman thus spoke, her manner gave the lie to her assertions, for the tears rose to her eyes while she added, "But the fairer and the more spotless the victim, is it not, my sister, the more worthy of acceptance?" She seemed glad to escape from the sensations which agitated her, and instantly added, "He will escape, my sister—there will be a rare caught in the thicket, and the hand of our revolted brethren shall not be on the youthful Joseph. Heaven can defend its own rights, even by means of babes and sucklings, of women and beardless boys."

"Heaven hath left us," said the other female; "for our sins and our fathers' the succour of the blessed saints have abandoned this accursed land. We may win the crown of martyrdom, but not that of earthly triumph. One, too, whose prudence was at this deep crisis so indispensable, has been called to a better world. The Abbot Eustatius is no more."

"May his soul have mercy!" said Magdalen Græme, "and may Heaven, too, have mercy upon us, who linger behind in this bloody land! His loss is indeed a perilous blow to our enterprise; for who remains behind possessing his far-fetched experience, his self-devoted zeal, his consummate wisdom, and his undaunted courage! He hath fallen with the church's standard in his hand, but God will raise up another to lift the blessed banner. Whom have the Chapter elected in his room?"

"It is rumoured no one of the few remaining brethren dare accept the office. The heretics have sworn that they will permit no future election, and will heavily punish any attempt to create a new Abbot of Saint Mary's. *Conjuraverunt inter se principes dicentes, Proficiamus laqueos ejus.*"

"*Quousque, Domine!*"—ejaculated Magdalen; "this, my sister, were indeed a perilous and fatal breach in our band; but I am firm in my belief, that another will arise in the place of him so untimely removed. Where is thy daughter Catherine?"

"In the parlour," answered the matron, "but"—She looked at Roland Græme, and muttered something in the ear of her friend.

"Fear it not," answered Magdalen Græme, "it is both lawful and necessary—fear nothing from him—I would he were as well grounded in the faith by which alone comes safety, as he is free from thought, deed, or speech of villainy. Therein is the heretics' discipline to be commended, my sister, that they train up their youth in strong morality, and choke up every inlet to youthful folly."

"It is but a cleansing of the outside of the cup," answered her friend, "a whitening of the sepulchre; but he shall see Catherine, since you, sister, judge it safe and meet.—Follow us, youth," she added, and led the way from the apartment with her friend. These were the only words which the matron had addressed to Roland Græme, who obeyed them in silence. As they paced through several winding passages and waste apartments with a very slow step, the young man had leisure to make some reflections on his situation,—reflections of a nature which his ardent temper considered as specially disagreeable. It seemed he had now got two mistresses, or tutoresses, instead of one, both elderly women, and both, it would seem, in league to direct his motions according to their own pleasure, and for the accomplishment of plans to which he was no party. This, he thought, was

"arguing reasonably enough, that whatever right his grandmother and benefactress had to guide his motions, she was neither entitled to transfer her authority, or to divide it with another, who seemed to assume, without ceremony, the same tone of absolute command over him.

"But it shall not long continue thus," thought Roland; "I will not be all my life the slave of a woman's whistle, to go when she bids, and come when she calls. No, by Saint Andrew! the hand that can hold the lance is above the control of the distaff. I will leave them the slipper'd collar in their hands on the first opportunity, and let them execute their own devices by their own proper force. It may save them both from peril, for I guess what they meditate is not likely to prove either safe or easy—the Earl of Murray and his heresy are too well rooted to be grubbed up by two old women."

As he thus resolved, they entered a low room, in which a third female was seated. This apartment was the first he had observed in the mansion, which was furnished with moveable seats, and with a wooden table, over which was laid a piece of tapestry. A carpet was spread on the floor, there was a grate in the chimney, and, in brief, the apartment had the air of being habitable and inhabited.

But Roland's eyes found better employment than to make observations on the accommodations of the chamber; for this second female inhabitant of the mansion seemed something very different from any thing he had yet seen there. At his first entry, she had greeted with a silent and low obeisance the two aged matrons, then glancing her eyes towards Roland, she adjusted a veil which hung back over her shoulders, so as to bring it over her face; an operation which she performed with much modesty, but without either affected haste or embarrassed timidity.

During this manoeuvre Roland had time to observe, that the face was that of a girl apparently not much past sixteen, and that the eyes were at once soft and brilliant. To these very favourable observations was added the certainty, that the fair object to whom they referred possessed an excellent slype, bordering perhaps on *embonpoint*, and therefore rather that of a Hebe than of a Sylph, but beautifully formed, and shewn to great advantage by the close jacket and petticoat which she wore after a foreign fashion, the last not quite long enough absolutely to conceal a very pretty foot, which rested on a bar of the table at which she sat; her round arms and taper fingers very busily employed in repairing the piece of tapestry which was spread on it, which exhibited several deplorable fissures, enough to demand the utmost skill of the most expert seamstress.

It is to be remarked, that it was by stolen glances that Roland Græme contrived to ascertain these interesting particulars; and he thought he could once or twice, notwithstanding the texture of the veil, detect the dangle in the act of taking similar cognizance of his own person. The matrons in the meanwhile continued their separate conversation, eyeing from time to time the young people, in a manner which left Roland in no doubt that they were the subject of their conversation. At length he distinctly heard Magdalen Græme say these words—"Nay, my sister, we must give them opportunity to speak together, and to become

acquainted; they must be personally known to each other, or how shall they be able to execute what they are intrusted with?"

It seemed as if the matron, not fully satisfied with her friend's reasoning, continued to offer some objections; but they were borne down by her more dictatorial friend.

"It must be so," she said, "my dear sister; let us therefore go forth on the balcony, to finish our conversation.—And do you," she said, addressing Roland and the girl, "become acquainted with each other."

With this she stepped up to the young woman, and raising her veil, discovered features which, whatever might be their ordinary complexion, were now covered with a universal blush.

"*Licium sit*," said Magdalen, looking at the other matron.

"*Via licium*," replied the other, with reluctant and hesitating acquiescence; and again adjusting the veil of the blushing girl, she dropped it so as to shade, though not to conceal her countenance, and whispered to her, in a tone loud enough for the page to hear, "Remember, Catherine, why thou art, and for what destined."

The matron then retreated with Magdalen Græme through one of the casements of the apartment, that opened on a large broad balcony, which, with its ponderous balustrade, had once run along the whole south front of the building which faced the brook, and formed a pleasant and commodious walk in the open air. It was now in some places deprived of the balustrade, in others broken and narrowed; but, ruinous as it was, could still be used as a pleasant promenade. Here then walked the two ancient dames, busied in their private conversation; yet not so much so, but that Roland could observe the matrons, as their thin forms darkened the casement in passing or repassing before it, dart a glance into the apartment, to see how matters were going on there.

CHAPTER XI.

Life hath its May, and is mirthful then:
The woods are vocal, and the flowers all odour;
Its very blast has mirth in't,—and the maidens,
Thou while they don their cloaks to screen their kirtles,
Laugh at the rain that wets them.

Old Play.

CATHERINE was at the happy age of innocence and buoyancy of spirit, when, after the first moment of embarrassment, was over, a situation of awkwardness, like that in which she was suddenly left to make acquaintance with a handsome youth, not even known to her by name, struck her, in spite of herself, in a ludicrous point of view. She bent her beautiful eyes upon the work with which she was busied, and with infinite gravity sate out the two first turns of the matrons upon the balcony; but then, glancing her deep blue eye a little towards Roland, and observing the embarrassment under which he laboured, now shifting on his chair, and now dangling his cap, the whole man evincing that he was perfectly at a loss how to open the conversation, she could keep her composure no longer, but after a vain struggle broke out into a sincere, though a very involuntary fit of laughing, so richly

accompanied by the laughter of her merry eyes, which actually glanced through the tears which the effort filled them with, and by the waving of her rich tresses, that the goddess of smiles herself never looked more lovely than Catherine at that moment. A court page would not have left her long alone in her mirth; but Roland was country-bred, and, besides, having some jealousy, as well as bashfulness, he took it into his head that he was himself the object of her inextinguishable laughter. His endeavours to sympathize with Catherine, therefore, could carry him no farther than a forced giggle, which had more of displeasure than of mirth in it, and which so much enhanced that of the girl, that it seemed to render it impossible for her ever to bring her laughter to an end, with whatever anxious pains she laboured to do so. For every one has felt, that when a paroxysm of laughter has seized him at a misbecoming time and place, the efforts which he makes to suppress it, nay, the very sense of the impropriety of giving way to it, tend only to augment and prolong the irresistible impulse.

It was undoubtedly lucky for Catherine, as well as for Roland, that the latter did not share in the excessive mirth of the former. For seated as she was, with her back to the casement, Catherine could easily escape the observation of the two matrons during the course of their promenade; whereas Græme was so placed, with his side to the window, that his mirth, had he shared that of his companion, would have been instantly visible, and could not have failed to give offence to the personages in question. He sate, however, with some impatience, until Catherine had exhausted either her power or her desire of laughing, and was returning with good grace to the exercise of her needle, and then he observed with some dryness, that "there seemed no great occasion to recommend to them to improve their acquaintance, as it seemed that they were already tolerably familiar."

Catherine had an extreme desire to set off upon a fresh score, but she repressed it strongly, and fixing her eyes on her work, replied by asking his pardon, and promising to avoid future offence.

Roland had sense enough to feel, that an air of offended dignity was very much misplaced, and that it was with a very different bearing he ought to meet the deep blue eyes which had borne such a hearty burden in the laughing scene. He tried, therefore, to extricate himself as well as he could from his blunder, by assuming a tone of coltish pondent gaiety, and requesting to know of the nymph, "how it was her pleasure that they should proceed in improving the acquaintance which had commenced so merrily."

"That," she said, "you must yourself discover; perhaps I have gone a step too far in opening our interview."

"Suppose," said Roland Græme, "we should begin as in a tale-book, by asking each other's names and histories."

"It is right well imagined," said Catherine, "and shews an argute judgment. Do you begin, and I will listen, and only put in a question or two at the dark parts of the story. Come, unfold then your name and history to my new acquaintance."

"I am called Roland Græme, and that tall old woman is my grandmother."

"And your tutoress!—good. Who are your parents?"

"They are both dead," replied Roland.

"Ay, but who were they? you had parents, I presume?"

"I suppose so," said Roland, "but I have never been able to learn much of their history. My father was a Scottish knight, who died gallantly in his stirrups—my mother was a Græme of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land—most of her family were killed when the Debateable country was burned by the Lord Maxwell and Herries of Caerlaverock."

"Is it long ago?" said the damsel.

"Before I was born," answered the page.

"That must be a great while since," said she, shaking her head gravely; "look you, I cannot weep for them."

"It needs not," said the youth, "they fell with honour."

"So much for your lineage, fair sir," replied his companion, "of whom I like the living specimen (a glance at the casement) far less than those that are dead. Our much honoured grandmother looks as if she could make one weep in sad earnest. And now, fair sir, for your own person—if you tell not the tale faster, it will be cut short in the middle; Mother Bridget pauses longer and longer every time she passes the window, and with her there is as little mirth as in the grave of your ancestors."

"My tale is soon told—I was introduced into the Castle of Avenel to be page to the lady of the mansion."

"She is a strict Huguenot, is she not?" said the maiden.

"As strict as Calvin himself." But my grandmother can play the puritan when it suits her purpose, and she had some plan of her own, for quartering me in the castle—it would have failed, however, after we had remained several weeks at the hamlet, but for an unexpected master of ceremonies—"

"And who was that?" said the girl.

"A large black dog, Wolf by name, who brought me into the castle one day in his mouth, like a hurt wild-duck, and presented me to the lady."

"A most respectable introduction, truly," said Catherine; "and what might you learn at this same castle? I love dearly to know what my acquaintances can do at need."

"To fly a hawk, hollow to a hound, back a horse, and wield lance, bow, and bruid."

"And to boast of all this when you have learned it," said Catherine, "which, in France at least, is the surest accomplishment of a page. But proceed, fair sir; how came your Huguenot lord and your no less Huguenot lady to receive and keep in the family so perilous a person as a Catholic page?"

"Because they knew not that part of my history, which from infancy I had been taught to keep secret—and because my grand-dame's former zealous attendance on their heretic chaplain, had laid all this suspicion to sleep, most fair Callipolis," said the page; and in so saying, he edged his chair towards the seat of the fair querist.

"Nay, but keep your distance, most gallant sir," answered the blue-eyed maiden, "for, unless I greatly mistake, these reverend ladies will soon interrupt our amicable conference, if the acquaintance they recommend shall seem to proceed beyond a certain point—so, fair sir, be pleased to

abide by your station, and reply to my questions. — By what achievements did you prove the qualities of a page, which you had thus happily acquired?"

Roland, who began to enter into the tone and spirit of the damsel's conversation, replied to her with becoming spirit.

"In no feat, fair gentlewoman, was I found expert, wherein there was mischief implied. I shot swans, hunted cats, frightened serving-women, chased the deer, and robbed the orchard. I say nothing of tormenting the chaplain in various ways, for that was my duty as a good Catholic."

"Now, as I am a gentlewoman," said Catherine, "I think these heretics have done Catholic penance in entertaining so all-accomplished a serving-man! And what, fair sir, might have been the unhappy event which deprived them of an inmate altogether to estimable?"

"Truly, fair gentlewoman," answered the youth, "your real proverb says that the longest lane will have a turning, and mine was more — it was, in fine, a turning off."

"Good!" said the merry young maiden, "it is an apt play on the word — and what occasion was taken for so important a catastrophe? — Nay, start not for my learning, I do know the schools — in plain phrase, why were you sent forth service?"

The page shrugged his shoulders while he replied, — "A short tale is soon told — and a short horse soon curried. — I made the falconer's boy taste of my switch — the falconer threatened to make me brook his cudgel — he is a kindly clown as well as a stout, and I would rather have been cudgelled by him than any man in Christendom to choose — but I knew not his qualities at that time — so I threatened to make him brook the stick, and my Lady made me brook the 'Begone!' — adieu to the page's office and the fair Castle of Avenel. — I had not travelled far before I met my venerable parent — And so tell your tale, fair gentlewoman, for mine is done."

"A happy grandmother," said the maiden, "who had the luck to find the stray page just when his mistress had slipped his leash, and a most lucky page that has jumped at once from a page to an old lady's gentleman-usher!"

"All this is nothing of your history," answered Roland Graeme, who began to be much interested in the congenial vivacity of this facetious young gentlewoman, — "tale for tale is fellow-traveller's justice."

"Wait till we are fellow-travellers, then," replied Catherine.

"Nay, you escape me not so," said the page; "if you deal not justly by me, I will call out to Dame Bridget, or whatever your dame be called, and proclaim you for a cheat."

"You shall not need," answered the maiden — "my history is the counterpart of your own; the same words might almost serve, change but dress and name. I am called Catherine Seyton, and I also am an orphan."

"Have your parents been long dead?"

"This is the only question," said she, throwing down her fine eyes with a sudden expression of sorrow, "that is the only question I cannot laugh at."

"And Dame Bridget is your grandmother?"

The sudden cloud passed away like that which crosses for an instant the summer sun, and she

answered with her usual lively expression, "Worse by twenty degrees — Dame Bridget is my maiden aunt."

"Over gods forbode!" said Roland — "Alas! that you have such a tale to tell! and what horror comes next?"

"Your own history, exactly. I was taken upon trial for service —"

"And turned off for pinching the duenna, or affronting my lady's waiting-woman?"

"Nay, our history varies there," said the damsel — "Our mistress broke up house, or had her house broke up, which is the same thing, and I am a free woman of the forest."

"And I am as glad of it as if any one had lined my doublet with cloth of gold," said the youth.

"I thank you for your mirth," said she, "but the matter is not likely to concern you."

"Nay, but go on," said the page, "for you will be presently interrupted; the two good dames have been soaring yonder on the balcony, like two old hooded crows, and their croak grows hoarser as night comes on; they will wing to roost presently. — This mistress of yours, fair gentlewoman, who was she, in God's name?"

"Oh, she has a fair name in the world," replied Catherine Seyton. "Few ladies kept a fairer house, or held more gentlewomen in her household; my aunt Bridget was one of her housekeepers. We never saw our mistress's blessed face, to be sure; but we heard enough of her; were up early and down late, and were kept to long prayers and light food."

"Out upon the penurious old beldam!" said the page.

"For Heaven's sake, blaspheme not!" said the girl with an expression of fear. — "God pardon us both! I meant no harm. I speak of our blessed Saint Catherine of Sienna! — may God forgive me that I spoke so lightly, and made you do a great sin and a great blasphemy. This was her nunnery, in which there were twelve nuns and an abbess. My aunt was the abbess, till the heretics turned all adrift."

"And where are your companions?" asked the youth.

"With the last year's snow," answered the maiden; "east, north, south, and west — some to France, some to Flanders, some, I fear, into the world and its pleasures. We have got permission to remain, or rather our remaining has been connived at, for my aunt has great relations among the Kerres, and they have threatened a death-feud if any one touches us; and bow and spear are the best warrant in these times."

"Nay, then, you sit under a sure shadow," said the youth; "and I suppose you wept yourself blind when Saint Catherine broke up housekeeping before you had taken arles¹ in her service?"

"Hush! for Heaven's sake," said the damsel, crossing herself! "no more of that! but I have not quite cried my eyes out," said she, turning them upon her work. It was one of those glances which would require the threefold plate of brass around the heart, more than it is needed by the mariners, to whom Hoage recommends it. Our youthful page had no defence whatever to offer.

¹ Arles — Earnest-money.

"What say you, Catherine," he said, "if we two, thus, strangely turned out of service at the same time, should give our two most venerable duennas the torch to hold, while we walk a merry measure with each other over the floor of this weary world?"

"A goodly proposal, truly," said Catherine, "and worthy the mad-cap brain of a discarded page!—And what shifts does your worship propose we should live by?—by singing ballads, cutting purses, or swaggering on the highway? for there, I think, you would find your most productive exchequer."

"Choose, you proud, peat!" said the page, drawing off in huge disdain at the calm and unembarrassed ridicule with which his wild proposal was received. And as he spoke the words, the casement was again darkened by the forms of the matrons—it opened, and admitted Magdalen Graeme and the Mother Abbess, so we must now style her, into the apartment.

CHAPTER XII.

Nay, hear me, brother—I am elder, wiser,
And holier than thou—And age, and wisdom,
And holiness, have presumptuous claims,
And will be listen'd to.

Old Play.

WHEN the matrons re-entered, and put an end to the conversation which we have detailed in the last chapter, Dame Magdalen Graeme thus addressed her grandson and his pretty companion: "Have you spoke together, my children?—Have you become known to each other as fellow-travellers on the same dark and dubious road, whom chance hath brought together, and who stay to learn the tempers and dispositions of those by whom their perils are to be shared?"

It was seldom the light-hearted Catherine could suppress a jest, so that she often spoke when she would have acted more wisely in holding her peace.

"Your grandson admires the journey which you propose so very greatly, that he was even now preparing for setting out upon it instantly."

"This is to be too forward, Roland," said the dame, addressing him, "as yesterday you were over sleek—the just aneap lies in obedience, which both waits for the signal to start, and obeys it when given.—But once again, my children, have you so perused each other's countenances, that when you meet, in whatever disguise the times may impose upon you, you may recognize each in the other the secret-agent of the mighty work in which you are to be leagued!—Look at each other, know each line and lineament of each other's countenance. Learn to distinguish by the step, by the sound of the voice, by the motion of the hand, by the glance of the eye, the partner whom Heaven hath sent to aid in working its will.—Wilt thou know that maiden, whensoever, or wheresoever you shall again meet her, my Roland Graeme?"

As readily as truly did Roland answer in the affirmative. "And thou, my daughter, wilt thou again remember the features of this youth?"

"Truly, mother," replied Catherine Seyton, "I have not seen so many men of late, that I should immediately forget your grandson, though I mark

not much about him that is deserving of special remembrance."

"Join hands, then, my children," said Magdalen Graeme; but, in saying so, was interrupted by her companion, whose conventual prejudices had been gradually giving her more and more uneasiness, and who could remain acquiescent no longer.

"Nay, my good sister, you forget," said she to Magdalen, "Catherine is the betrothed bride of Heaven—these intimacies cannot be."

"It is in the cause of Heaven that I command them to embrace," said Magdalen, with the full force of her powerful voice; "the end, sister, sanctifies the means we must use."

"They call me Lady Abbess, or Mother at the least, who address me," said Dame Bridget, drawing herself up, as if offended at her friend's authoritative manner—"the Lady of Heathergill forgets that she speaks to the Abbess of Saint Catherine."

"When I was what you call me," said Magdalen, "you indeed were the Abbess of Saint Catherine, but both names are now gone, with all the rank that the world and that the church gave to them, and we are now, to the eye of human judgment, two poor, despised, oppressed women, dragging our dishonoured old age to a humble grave. But what are we in the eye of Heaven?—Ministers, sent forth to work his will,—in whose weakness the strength of the church shall be manifested—before whom shall be humbled the wisdom of Murray, and the dark strength of Morton.—And to such wouldst thou apply the narrow rules of thy cloistered seclusion?—or, hast thou forgotten the order which I shewed thee from thy Superior, subjecting thee to me in these matters?"

"On thy head, then, be the scandal and the sin," said the Abbess, sullenly.

"On mine be they both," said Magdalen. "I say, embrace each other, my children."

But Catherine, aware, perhaps, how the dispute was likely to terminate, had escaped from the apartment, and so disappointed the grandson, at least as much as the old matron.

"She is gone," said the Abbess, "to provide some little refreshment. But it will have little savour to those who dwell in the world; for, at least, cannot dispense with the rules to which I am vowed, because it is the will of wicked men to break down the sanctuary in which they wont to be observed."

"It is well, my sister," replied Magdalen, "to pay each even the smallest tithes of mint and cummin which the church demands, and I blame not thy scrupulous observance of the rules of thine order. But they were established by the church, and for the church's benefit; and reason it is that they should give way when the salvation of the church herself is at stake."

The Abbess made no reply.

One more acquainted with human nature than the inexperienced page, might have found amusement in comparing the different kinds of fanaticism which these two females exhibited. The Abbess—timid, narrow-minded, and discontented, clung to ancient usages and pretensions which were ended by the Reformation; and was in adversity, as she had been in prosperity, scrupulous, weak-spirited, and bigoted. While the fiery and more lofty spirit of her companion suggested a wider field of effort, and would not be limited by ordinary rules in the extra-

ordinary schemes which were suggested by her bold and irregular imagination. But Roland Græme, instead of tracing these peculiarities of character in the two old dames, only waited with great anxiety for the return of Catherine, expecting probably that the proposal of the fraternal embrace would be renewed, as his grandmother seemed disposed to carry matters with a high hand.

His expectations, or hopes, if we may call them so, were, however, disappointed; for, when Catherine re-entered on the summons of the Abbess, and placed on the table an earthen pitcher of water, and four wooden platters, with cups of the same materials, the Dame of Henthergill, satisfied with the arbitrary mode in which she had borne down the opposition of the Abbess, pursued her victory no farther—a moderation for which her grandson, in his heart, returned her but slender thanks.

In the meanwhile, Catherine continued to place upon the table the slender preparations for the meal of a recluse, which consisted almost entirely of colwort, boiled and served up in a wooden platter, having no better seasoning than a little salt, and no better accompaniment than some coarse barley-bread, in very moderate quantity. The water-pitcher, already mentioned, furnished the only beverage. After a Latin grace, delivered by the Abbess, the guests sat down to their spare entertainment. The simplicity of the fare appeared to produce no distaste, in the females, who ate of it moderately, but with the usual appearance of appetite. But Roland Græme had been used to better cheer, Sir Halbert Glendinning, who affected even an unusual degree of nobleness in his house-keeping, maintained it in a style of genial hospitality, which rivalled that of the Northern Barons of England. He might think, perhaps, that by doing so, he acted yet more completely the part for which he was born—that of a great Baron and a leader. Two bullocks, and six sheep, weekly, were the allowance when the Baron was at home, and the number was not greatly diminished during his absence. A boll of malt was weekly brewed into ale, which was used by the household at discretion. Bread was baked in proportion for the consumption of his domestics and retainers; and in this scene of plenty had Roland Græme now lived for several years. It formed a bad introduction to lukewarm greens and spring water; and probably his countenance indicated some sense of the difference, for the Abbess observed, “It would seem, my son, that the tables of the heretic Baron, whom you have so long followed, are more daintily furnished than those of the suffering daughters of the church; and yet, not upon the most solemn nights of festival, when the nuns were permitted to eat their portion at mine own table, did I consider the cakes, which were then served up, as half so delicious as these vegetables and this water, on which I prefer to feed, rather than do aught which may derogate from the strictness of my vow. It shall never be said that the mistress of this house made it a house of fasting, when days of darkness and of affliction were hanging over the Holy Church, of which I am an unworthy member.”

“Well hast thou said, my sister,” replied Magdalen Græme; “but now it is not only time to suffer in the good cause, but to act in it. And since our pilgrim’s meal is finished, let us go apart to prepare for our journey to-morrow, and to advise on the

manner in which these children shall be employed, and what measures we can adopt to supply their thoughtlessness and lack of discretion.”

Notwithstanding his indifferent cheer, the heart of Roland Græme bounded high at this proposal, which he doubted not would lead to another tête-à-tête betwixt him and the pretty novice. But he was mistaken. Catherine, it would seem, had no mind so far to indulge him; for, moved either by delicacy or caprice, or some of those indescribable shades betwixt the one and the other, with which women love to tease, and at the same time to captivate, the ruder sex, she reminded the Abbess that it was necessary she should retire for an hour before vespers; and, receiving the ready and approving nod of her Superior, she arose to withdraw. But, before leaving the apartment, she made obeisance to the matrons, bending herself till her hands touched her knees, and then made a lesser reverence to Roland, which consisted in a slight bend of the body and gentle depression of the head. This she performed very demurely; but the party on whom the salutation was conferred, thought he could discern in her manner an arch and mischievous exultation over his secret disappointment.—“The devil take the saucy girl,” she thought in his heart, though the presence of the Abbess should have repressed all such profane imaginations,—“she is as hard-hearted as the laughing hyæna that the story-books tell of—she has a mind that I shall not forget her this night at least.”

The matrons now retired also, giving the page to understand that he was on no account to stir from the convent, or to shew himself at the windows, the Abbess assigning as a reason, the readiness with which the rude heretics caught at every occasion of scandalizing the religious orders.

“This is worse than the rigour of Mr Henry Warden himself,” said the page, when he was left alone; “for, to do him justice, however strict in requiring the most rigid attention during the time of his homilies, he left us to the freedom of our own wills afterwards—ay, and would take a share in our pastimes, too, if he thought them entirely innocent. But these old women are utterly wrapt up in gloom, mystery, and self-denial.—Well, then, if I must neither stir out of the gate nor look out at window, I will at least see what the inside of the house contains that may help to pass away one’s time—peradventure, I may light on that blue-eyed laughter or some corrie or other.”

Going, therefore, out of the chamber by the entrance opposite to that through which the two matrons had departed, (for it may be readily supposed that he had no desire to intrude on their privacy,) he wandered from one chamber to another, through the deserted edifice, seeking, with boyish eagerness, some source of interest or amusement. Here he passed through a long gallery, opening on either hand into the little cells of the nuns, all deserted, and deprived of the few trifling articles of furniture which the rules of the Order admitted.

“The birds are flown,” thought the page; “but whether they will find themselves worse off in the open air than in these damp narrow cages, I leave my Lady Abbess and my venerable relative to settle betwixt them. I think the wild young lark whom they have left behind them, would like best to sing under God’s free sky.”

A winding stair, strait and narrow, as if to remind

the suns of their duties of fast and maceration, led down, to a lower suite of apartments, which occupied the ground story of the house. These rooms were even more ruinous than those which he had left, for, having encountered the first fury of the assailants by whom the nunnery had been wasted, the windows had been dashed in, the doors broken down, and even the partitions betwixt the apartments, in some places, destroyed. As he thus stalked from desolation to desolation, and began to think of returning from so uninteresting a research to the chamber which he had left, he was surprised to hear the low of a cow very close to him. The sound was so unexpected at the time and place, that Roland Græme started as if it had been the voice of a lion, and laid his hand on his dagger, while at the same moment the light and lovely form of Catherine Seyton presented itself at the door of the apartment from which the sound had issued.

"Good even to you, valiant champion!" said she; "since the days of Guy of Warwick, never was one more worthy to encounter a dun cow."

"Cow?" said Roland Græme, "by my faith, I thought it had been the devil that roared so near me. Who ever heard of a convent containing a cow-house?"

"Cow and calf may come hither now," answered Catherine, "for we have no means to keep out either. But I advise you, kind sir, to return to the place from whence you came."

"Not till I see your charge, fair sister," answered Roland, and made his way into the apartment, in spite of the half serious half laughing remonstrances of the girl.

The poor solitary cow, now the only severe recluse within the nunnery, was quartered in a spacious chamber, which had once been the refectory of the convent. The roof was graced with gabled arches, and the wall with niches, from which the images had been pulled down. These remnants of architectural ornaments were strangely contrasted with the rude crib constructed for the cow in one corner of the apartment, and the stack of fodder which was piled beside it for her food.

"By my faith," said the page, "Crombie is more lordly lodged than any one here!"

"You had best remain with her," said Catherine, "and supply by your filial attentions the offspring she has had the ill luck to lose."

"I will remain, at least, to help you to prepare her night's lair, pretty Catherine," said Roland, seizing upon a pitch-fork.

"By no means," said Catherine; "for, besides that you know not in the least how to do her that service, you will bring a chiding my way, and I get enough of that in the regular course of things."

"What! for accepting my assistance?" said the page, — "for accepting my assistance, who am to be your confederate in some deep matter of import! That were altogether unreasonable — and, now I think on it, tell me if you can, what is this mighty enterprise to which I am destined?"

"Robbing a bird's nest, I should suppose," said Catherine, "considering the champion whom they have selected."

"By my faith," said the youth, "and he that has taken a falcon's nest in the Scours of Polwoodie, has done something to brag of, my fair sister. — But

that is all over now — a murrain on the nest, and the eyases and their food, washed or unwashed, for it was all anon of cramming these worthless lites that I was sent upon my present travels. Save that I have met with you, pretty sister, I could eat my dagger-hilt for vexation at my own folly. But, as we are to be fellow-travellers —"

"Fellow-labourers! not fellow-travellers!" answered the girl; "for to your comfort be it known, that the Lady Abbess and I set out earlier than you and your respected relative to-morrow, and that I partly endure your company at present, because it may be long ere we meet again."

"By Saint Andrew, but it shall not though," answered Roland; "I will not hunt at all unless we are to hunt in couples."

"I suspect, in that and in other points, we must do as we are bid," replied the young lady. — "But, hark! I hear my aunt's voice."

The old lady entered in good earnest, and darted a severe glance at her niece, while Roland had the ready wit to busy himself about the halter of the cow.

"The young gentleman," said Catherine, gravely, "is helping me to tie the cow up faster to her stake, for I find that last night when she put her head out of window and lowed, she alarmed the whole village; and we shall be suspected of sorcery among the heretics, if they do not discover the cause of the apparition, or lose our cow if they do."

"Relieve yourself of that fear," said the Abbess, somewhat ironically; "the person to whom she is now sold, comes for the animal presently."

"Good night, then, my poor companion," said Catherine, patting the animal's shoulders; "I hope thou hast fallen into kind hands, for my happiest hours of late have been spent in tending thee — I would I had been born to no better task!"

"Now, out upon thee, mean-spirited wench!" said the Abbess; "is that a speech worthy of the name of Seyton, or of the mouth of a sister of this house, treading the path of election — and to be spoken before a stranger youth, too! — Go to my oratory, minion — there read your Hours till I come thither, when I will read you such a lecture as shall make you prize the blessings which you possess."

Catherine was about to withdraw in silence, casting a half sorrowful half comic glance at Roland Græme, which seemed to say — "You see to what your untimely visit has exposed me," when, suddenly changing her mind, she came forward to the page, and extended her hand as she bid him good evening. Their palms had pressed each other ere the astonished matron could interfere, and Catherine had time to say — "Forgive me, mother; it is long since we have seen a face that looked with kindness on us. Since these disorders have broken up our peaceful retreat, all has been gloom and malignity. I bid this youth kindly farewell, because he has come hither in kindness, and because the odds are great, that we may never again meet in this world. I guess better than she, that the schemes on which you are rushing are too mighty for your management, and that you are now setting the stone a-rolling, which must surely crush you in its descent. I bid farewell," she added, "to my fellow-victim!"

This was spoken with a tone of deep and serious feeling, altogether different from the usual levity

1 See Note D. *Nunnery of St Bridget.*

of Catherine's manner, and plainly showed, that beneath the giddiness of extreme youth and total inexperience, there lurked in her bosom a deeper power of sense and feeling, than her conduct had hitherto expressed.

The Abbess remained a moment silent, after she had left the room. The proposed rebuke died on her tongue, and she appeared struck with the deep and foreboding tone in which her niece had spoken her good-even. She led the way in silence to the apartment which they had formerly occupied, and where there was prepared a small refectory, as the Abbess termed it, consisting of milk and barley-bread. Magdalen Græme, summoned to take share in this collation, appeared from an adjoining apartment, but Catherine was seen no more. There was little said during the hasty meal, and after it was finished, Roland Græme was dismissed to the nearest cell, where some preparations had been made for his repose.

The strange circumstances in which he found himself, had their usual effect in preventing slumber from hastily descending on him, and he could distinctly hear, by a low but earnest murmuring in the apartment which he had left, that the matrons continued in deep consultation to a late hour. As they separated he heard the Abbess distinctly express herself thus: "In a word, my sister, I venerate your character and the authority with which my Superiors have invested you; yet it seems to me, that, ere entering on this perilous course, we should consult some of the Fathers of the Church."

"And how and where are we to find a faithful Bishop or Abbot at whom to ask counsel? The faithful Eusebius is no more—he is withdrawn from a world of evil, and from the tyranny of heretics. May Heaven and Our Lady assuage him of his sins, and abridge the penance of his mortal infirmities!—Where shall we find another, with whom to take counsel?"

"Heaven will provide for the Church," said the Abbess, "and the faithful fathers who yet are suffered to remain in the house of Kennaquhair, will proceed to elect an Abbot. They will not suffer the staff to fall down, or the mitre to be unfilled, for the threats of heresy."

"That will I learn to-morrow," said Magdalen Græme; "yet who now takes the office of an hour, save to partake with the spoilers in their work of plunder!—to-morrow will tell us if one of the thousand saints who are sprung from the House of Saint Mary's continues to look down on it in its misery.—Farewell, my sister—we meet at Edinburgh."

"Benedicite!" answered the Abbess, and they parted.

"To Kennaquhair and to Edinburgh we bend our way," thought Roland Græme. "That information have I purchased by a sleepless hour—it suits well with my purpose. At Kennaquhair I shall see Father Ambrose;—at Edinburgh I shall find the means of shaping my own course through this bustling world, without bartering my affectionate relation—at Edinburgh, too, I shall see again the witching novice, with her blue eyes and her provoking smile."—He fell asleep, and it was the dream of Catherine Seyton.

CHAPTER XIII.

What, Dagon up again!—I thought we had laid him down on the threshold, never more to rise.
Bring wedges and axe; and, neighbours, lend your hands,
And rive the idol into winter tagots!

Atheism, or the Converted Dane.

ROLAND GRÆME slept long and sound, and the sun was high over the horizon, when the voice of his companion summoned him to resume their pilgrimage; and when, hastily arranging his dress, he went to attend her call, the enthusiastic matron stood already 'at the threshold, prepared for her journey. There was in all the deportment of this remarkable woman, a promptitude of execution, and a sternness of perseverance, founded on the fanaticism which she nursed so deeply, and which seemed to absorb all the ordinary purposes and feelings of mortality. One only human affection gleamed through her enthusiastic energies, like the broken glimpses of the sun through the rising clouds of a storm. It was her maternal fondness for her grandson—a fondness carried almost to the verge of dotage, in circumstances where the Catholic religion was not concerned, but which gave way instantly when it chanced either to thwart or come in contact with the more settled purpose of her soul, and the more devoted duty of her life. Her life she would willingly have laid down to save the earthly object of her affection; but that object itself she was ready to hazard, and would have been willing to sacrifice, could the restoration of the Church of Rome have been purchased with his blood. Her discourse by the way, excepting on the few occasions in which her extreme love of her grandson found opportunity to display itself in anxiety for his health and accommodation, turned entirely on the duty of raising up the fallen honours of the Church, and replacing a Catholic sovereign on the throne. There were times at which she hinted, though very obscurely and distantly, that she herself was foredoomed by Heaven to perform a part in this important task; and that she had more than mere human warranty for the zeal with which she engaged in it. But on this subject she expressed herself in such general language, that it was not easy to decide whether she made any actual pretensions to a direct and supernatural call, like the celebrated Elizabeth Barton, commonly called the Nun of Kent; or whether she only dwelt upon the general duty which was incumbent on all Catholics of the time, and the pressure of which she felt in an extraordinary degree.

Yet though Magdalen Græme gave no direct intimation of her pretensions to be considered as something beyond the ordinary class of mortals, the demeanour of one or two persons amongst the travellers whom they occasionally met, as they entered the more fertile and populous part of the valley, seemed to indicate their belief in her superior attributes. It is true, that two clowns, who drove before them a herd of cattle—one or two village wenches, who seemed bound for some merry-making—a strolling soldier, in a rusted morion, and a wandering assent, as his threadbare black cloak and his satchel of books proclaimed him—passed our travellers without observation,

or with a look of contempt; and, moreover, that two or three children, attracted by the appearance of a dress so nearly resembling that of a pilgrim, joined in looting and calling "Out upon the mass-monger!" But one or two, who nourished in their bosoms respect for the downfallen hierarchy—casting first a timorous glance around, to see that no one observed them—hastily crossed themselves—bent their knee to Sister Magdalen, by which name they saluted her—kissed her hand, or even the hem of her dalmatique—received with humility the Benedicite with which she repaid their obeisance; and then starting up, and again looking timidly round to see that they had been unobserved, hastily resumed their journey. Even while within sight of persons of the prevailing faith, there were individuals bold enough, by folding their arms and bending their head, to give distant and silent intimation that they recognized Sister Magdalen, and honoured alike her person and her purpose.

She failed not to notice to her grandson these marks of honour and respect which from time to time she received. "You see," she said, "my son, that the enemies have been unable altogether to suppress the good spirit, or to root out the true seed. Amid heresies and schisms, spoilers of the church's lands, and scoffers at saints and sacraments, there is left a remnant."

"It is true, my mother," said Roland Græme; "but methinks they are of a quality which can help us but little. See you not all those who wear steel at their side, and bear marks of better quality, ruffe past us as they pass the meanest beggars! for those who have marks of sympathy, are the poorest of the people, and most outcast of the needy, who have no skill to share with us, nor swords to defend us, nor skill to use them if they had. That poor wretch that last kneeled to you with such deep devotion, and who seemed emaciated by the touch of some wasting disease within, and the grasp of poverty without—that pale, shivering, miserable catiff, how can he aid the great schemes you meditate?"

"Much, my son," said the matron, with more mildness than the page perhaps expected. "When that pious son of the church returns from the shrine of Saint Ringan, whither he now travels by my counsel, and by the aid of good Catholics,—when he returns, healed of his wasting malady, high in health, and strong in limb, will not the glory of his faithfulness, and its miraculous reward, speak louder in the ears of this besotted people of Scotland, than the din which is weekly made in a thousand heretical pulpits?"

"Ay, but, mother, I fear the Saint's hand is out. It is long since we have heard of a miracle performed at Saint Ringan's."

The matron made a dead pause, and, with a voice tremulous with emotion, asked, "Art thou so unhappy as to doubt the power of the blessed Saint?"

"Nay, mother," the youth hastened to reply, "I believe as the Holy Church commands, and doubt not Saint Ringan's power of healing; but, be it said with reverence, he hath not of late shewed the inclination."

"And has this land deserved it?" said the Catholic matron, advancing hastily while she spoke, until she attained the summit of a rising ground, over which the path led, and then standing again

still. "Here," she said, "stood the Cross, the lights of the Halidome of Saint Mary's—here—on this eminence—from which the eye of the holy pilgrim might first catch a view of that ancient Monastery, the light of the land, the abode of saints, and the grave of monarchs—Where is now that emblem of our faith? It lies on the earth—a shapeless block, from which the broken fragments have been carried off, for the meanest uses, till now no semblance of its original form remains. Look towards the east, my son, where the sun was wont to glitter on stately spires—from which crosses and bells have now been hurled, as if the land had been invaded once more by barbarous heathens.—Look at yonder battlements, of which we can, even at this distance, descry the partial demolition; and ask if this land can expect from the blessed saints, whose shrines and whose images have been profaned, any other miracles but those of vengeance! How long," she exclaimed, looking upward, "How long shall it be delayed!" She paused, and then resumed with enthusiastic rapidity, "Yea, my son, all on earth is but for a period—joy and grief, triumph and desolation, succeed each other like cloud and sunshine;—the vineyard shall not be forever trodden down, the gaps shall be amended, and the fruitful branches once more dressed and trimmed. Even this day—ay, even this hour, I trust to hear news of importance. Dally not—let us on—time is brief, and judgment is certain."

She resumed the path which led to the Abbey—a path which, in ancient times, was carefully marked out by posts and rails, to assist the pilgrim in his journey—these were now torn up and destroyed. A half hour's walk placed them in sight of the once splendid Monastery, which, although the church was as yet entire, had not escaped the fury of the times. The long range of cells and of apartments for the use of the brethren, which occupied two sides of the great square, were almost entirely ruined, the interior having been consumed by fire, which only the massive architecture of the outward walls had enabled them to resist. The Abbot's house, which formed the third side of the square, was, though injured, still inhabited, and afforded refuge to the few brethren who yet, rather by connivance than by actual authority, were permitted to remain at Kennaquhair. Their stately offices—their pleasant gardens—the magnificent cloisters constructed for their recreation, were all dilapidated and ruinous; and some of the building materials had apparently been put into requisition by persons in the village and in the vicinity, who, formerly vassals of the Monastery, had not hesitated to appropriate to themselves a part of the spoils. Roland saw fragments of Gothic pillars richly carved, occupying the place of door-posts to the meanest huts; and here and there a mutilated statue, inverted or laid on its side, made the door-post, or threshold, of a wretched cow-house. The church itself was less injured than the other buildings of the Monastery. But the images which had been placed in the numerous niches of its columns and buttresses, having all fallen under the charge of idolatry, to which the superstitious devotion of the Papists had justly exposed them, had been broken and thrown down, without much regard to the preservation of the rich and airy canopies and pedestals on which they were placed; nor, if the

devastation had stopped short at this point, could we have considered the preservation of these monuments of antiquity as an object to be put in the balance with the introduction of the reformed worship.

Our pilgrims saw the demolition of these sacred and venerable representations of saints and angels—for as sacred and venerable they had been taught to consider them—with very different feelings. The antiquary may be permitted to regret the necessity of the action, but to Magdalen Græme it seemed a deed of impiety, deserving the instant vengeance of heaven,—a sentiment in which her relative joined for the moment as cordially, as herself. Neither, however, gave vent to their feelings in words, and uplifted hands and eyes formed their only mode of expressing them. The page was about to approach the great eastern gate of the church, but was prevented by his guide. "That gate," she said, "has long been blockaded, that the heretical rubble may not know there still exist among the brethren of Saint Mary's men who dare worship where their predecessors prayed while alive, and were interred when dead—follow me this way, my son."

Roland Græme followed accordingly; and Magdalen, casting a hasty glance to see whether they were observed, (for she had learned caution from the danger of the times,) commanded her grandson to knock at a little wicket which she pointed out to him. "But knock gently," she added, with a motion expressive of caution. After a little space, during which no answer was returned, she signed to Roland to beat his summons for admission; and the door at length partially opening, discovered a glimpse of the thin and timid porter, by whom the duty was performed, skulking from the observation of those who stood without; but endeavouring at the same time to gain a sight of them without being himself seen. How different from the proud consciousness of dignity with which the porter of ancient days offered his important brow, and his goodly person, to the pilgrims who repaired to Kenilworth! His solemn "*Intrate, mei filii*," was exchanged for a tremulous "You cannot enter now—the brethren are in their chambers." But, when Magdalen Græme asked, in an under tone of voice, "Hast thou forgotten me, my brother?" he changed his apologetic refusal to "Enter, my honoured sister, enter speedily, for evil eyes are upon us."

They entered accordingly, and having waited until the porter had, with jealous haste, barred and bolted the wicket, were conducted by him through several dark and winding passages. As they walked slowly on, he spoke to the matron in a subdued voice, as if he feared to trust the very walls with the avowal which he communicated.

"Our Fathers are assembled in the Chapter-house, worthy sister—yes, in the Chapter-house—for the election of an Abbot.—Ah, Benedicite! there must be no ringing of bells—no high mass—no opening of the great gates now, that the people might see and venerate their spiritual Father! Our Fathers must hide themselves rather like robbers who choose a leader, than godly priests who elect a mitred Abbot."

"Regard not that, my brother," answered Magdalen Græme; "the first successors of Saint Peter himself were elected, not in sunshine, but in tempests—not in the halls of the Vatican, but in the

subterranean vaults and dungeons of heathen Rome—they were not gratulated with shouts and salvos of cannon-shot and of musketry, and the display of artificial fire—no, my brother—but by the loose summons of Lictors and Prætors, who came to drag the Fathers of the Church to martyrdom. From such adversity was the Church once raised, and by such will it now be purified.—And mark me, brother! not in the proudest days of the mitred Abbey, was a Superior ever chosen, whom his office shall so much honour, as he shall be honoured, who now takes it upon him in these days of tribulation. On whom, my brother, will the choice fall?"

"On whom can it fall—or, alas! who would dare to reply to the call, save the worthy pupil of the Sainted Eustatius—the good and valiant Father Ambrose?"

"I know it," said Magdalen; "my heart told me, long ere your lips had uttered his name. Stand forth, courageous champion, and man the fatal breach!—Rise, bold and experienced pilot, and seize the helm while the tempest rages!—Turn back the battle, brave raiser of the fallen standard!—Wield crook and staff, noble shepherd of a scattered flock!"

"I pray you, hush, my sister!" said the porter, opening a door which led into the great church, "the brethren will be presently here to celebrate their election with a solemn mass—I must marshal them the way to the high altar—all the offices of this venerable house have now devolved on one poor decrepit old man."

He left the church, and Magdalen and Roland remained alone in the vaulted space, whose style of rich, yet chastely sculpture, referred its origin to the early part of the fourteenth century, the best period of Gothic building. But the niches were stripped of their images in the inside as well as the outside of the church; and in the pell-mell havoc, the tombs of warriors and of princes had been included in the demolition of the idolatrous shrines. "Lances and swords of antique size, which had hung over the tombs of mighty warriors of former days, lay now strewn among relics, with which the devotion of pilgrims had graced those of their peculiar saints; and the fragments of the knights and dames, which had once lain recumbent, or kneeled in an attitude of devotion, where their mortal relics were reposed, were mingled with those of the saints and angels of the Gothic chisel, which the hand of violence had sent headlong from their stations."

The most fatal symptom of the whole appeared to be, that, though this violence had now been committed for many months, the Fathers had lost so totally all heart and resolution, that they had not adventured even upon clearing away the rubbish, or restoring the church to some decent degree of order. This might have been done without much labour. But terror had overpowered the scanty remains of a body, once so powerful, and, sensible they were only suffered to remain in this ancient seat by connivance and from compassion, they did not venture upon taking any step which might be construed into an assertion of their ancient rights, contenting themselves with the secret and obscure exercise of their religious ceremonial, in as unostentatious a manner as was possible.

Two or three of the more aged brethren had sunk under the pressure of the times, and the ruins had been partly cleared away to permit their interment. One stone had been laid over Father Nicholas, which recorded of him in special, that he had taken the vows during the incumbency of Abbot Ingelram, the period to which his memory so frequently recurred. Another flag-stone, yet more recently deposited, covered the body of Philip the Sacristan, eminent for his aquatic excursion with the phantom of Avenel; and a third, the most recent of all, bore the outline of a mitre, and the words *Hic jacet Eustatius Abbas*; for no one dared to add a word of commendation in favour of his learning, and strenuous zeal for the Roman Catholic faith.

Magdalen Græme looked at and perused the brief records of these monuments successively, and paused over that of Father Eustace. "In a good hour for thyself," she said, "but oh! in an evil hour for the Church, wert thou called from us. Let thy spirit be with us, holy man—encourage thy successor to tread in thy footsteps—give him thy bold and inventive capacity, thy zeal and thy discretion—~~even~~ thy piety exceeds not his." As she spoke, a side door, which closed a passage from the Abbot's house into the church, was thrown open, that the Fathers might enter the choir, and conduct to the high altar the Superior whom they had elected.

In former times, this was one of the most splendid of the many pageants which the hierarchy of Rome had devised to attract the veneration of the faithful. The period during which the Abbacy remained vacant, was a state of mourning, or, as their emblematical phrase expressed it, of widowhood; a melancholy term, which was changed into rejoicing and triumph when a new Superior was chosen. When the folding doors were on such solemn occasions thrown open, and the new Abbot appeared on the threshold in full-blown dignity, with ring and mitre, and dalmatique and crozier, his hoary standard bearers and his juvenile dispensers of incense preceding him, and the venerable train of monks behind him, with all besides which could announce the supreme authority to which he was now raised, his appearance was a signal for the magnificent jubilate to rise from the organ and music-loft, and to be joined by the corresponding bursts of Alleluiah from the whole assembled congregation. Now all was changed. In the midst of rubbish and desolation, seven or eight old men, bent and shaken as much by grief and fear as by age, shrouded hastily in the prescribed dress of their order, wandered like a procession of spectres, from the door which had been thrown open, up through the encumbered passage, to the high altar, there to instal their elected Superior a chief of ruins. It was like a band of bewildered travellers choosing a chief in the wilderness of Arabia; or a shipwrecked crew electing a captain upon the barren island on which fate has thrown them.

They who, in peaceful times, are most ambitious of authority among others, shrink from the competition at such eventful periods, when neither ease nor parade attend the possession of it, and when it gives only a painful pre-eminence both in danger and in labour, and exposes the ill-fated chieftain to the murmurs of his discontented associates, as well

as to the first assault of the common enemy. But he on whom the office of the Abbot of Saint Mary's was now conferred, had a mind fitted for the situation to which he was called. Bold and enthusiastic, yet generous and forgiving—wise and skilful, yet zealous and prompt—he wanted but a better cause than the support of a decaying superstition, to have raised him to the rank of a truly great man. But as the end crowns the work, it also forms the rule by which it must be ultimately judged; and those who, with sincerity and generosity, fight and fall in an evil cause, posterity can only compassionate as victims of a generous but fatal error. Amongst these, we must rank Ambrosius, the last Abbot of Kennaquhair, whose designs must be condemned, as their success would have riveted on Scotland the chains of antiquated superstition and spiritual tyranny; but whose talents commanded respect, and whose virtues, even from the enemies of his faith, extorted esteem.

The bearing of the new Abbot served of itself to dignify a ceremonial which was deprived of all other attributes of grandeur. Conscious of the peril in which they stood, and recalling, doubtless, the better days they had seen, there hung over his brethren an appearance of mingled terror, and grief, and shame, which induced them to hurry over the office in which they were engaged, as something at once degrading and dangerous.

But not so Father Ambrose. His features, indeed, expressed a deep melancholy, as he walked up the centre aisle, amid the ruin of things which he considered as holy, but his brow was undejected, and his step firm and solemn. He seemed to think that the dominion which he was about to receive, depended in no sort upon the external circumstances under which it was conferred; and if a mind so firm was accessible to sorrow or fear, it was not on his own account, but on that of the Church to which he had devoted himself.

At length he stood on the broken steps of the high altar, barefooted, as was the rule, and holding in his hand his pastoral staff, for the gemmed ring and jewelled mitre had become secular spoils. No obedient vassals came, man after man, to make their homage, and to offer the tribute which should provide their spiritual Superior with palfrey and trappings. No Bishop assisted at the solemnity, to receive into the higher ranks of the Church nobility a dignitary, whose voice in the legislature was as potential as his own. With hasty and maned rites, the few remaining brethren stepped forward alternately to give their new Abbot the kiss of peace, in token of fraternal affection and spiritual homage. Mass was then hastily performed, but in such precipitation as if it had been hurried over rather to satisfy the scruples of a few youths, who were impatient to set out on a hunting party, than as if it made the most solemn part of a solemn ordination. The officiating priest faltered, as he spoke the service, and often looked around, as if he expected to be interrupted in the midst of his office; and the brethren listened as to that which, short as it was, they wished yet more abridged.¹

¹ In Catholic countries, in order to reconcile the pleasures of the great with the observances of religion, it was common, when a party was bent for the chase, to celebrate mass, abridged and mimed of its rites, called a hunting-mass, the brevity of which was designed to correspond with the impatience of the audience.

These symptoms of alarm increased as the ceremony proceeded, and, as it seemed, were not caused by mere apprehension alone; for, amid the pauses of the hymn, there were heard without sounds of a very different sort, beginning faintly and at a distance, but at length approaching close to the exterior of the church, and stunning with dissonant clamour those engaged in the service. The winding of horns, blown with no regard to harmony, or concert; the jangling of bells, the thumping of drums, the squeaking of bagpipes, and the clash of cymbals—the shouts of a multitude, now as in laughter, now as in anger—the shrill tones of female voices, and of those of children, mingling with the deeper clamours of men, formed a Babel of sounds, which first drowned, and then awed into utter silence, the official hymns of the Convent. The cause and result of this extraordinary interruption will be explained in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIV.

Not the wild billow, when it breaks its barrier—
Not the wild wind, sweeping from its cavern—
Not the wild fiend, that mingles both together
And pours the rage upon the ripening harvest.
Can match the wild freaks of this mischievous meeting—
Come, yet fearful—droll, and yet destructive.

The Conspiracy.

THE monks ceased their song, which, like that of the choristers in the legend of the Witch of Berkeley, died away in a quiver of consternation; and, like a flock of chicks, disturbed by the presence of the kite, they at first made a movement to disperse and fly in different directions, and then, with despair, rather than hope, huddled themselves around their new Abbot; who, retaining the lofty and undimmed look which had dignified him through the whole ceremony, stood on the higher step of the altar, as if desirous to be the most conspicuous mark, in which danger might discharge itself, and to save his companions by his self-devotion, since he could afford them no other protection.

Involuntarily, as it were, Magdalen Graeme and the page stepped from the station which hitherto they had occupied unnoticed, and approached to the altar, as desirous of sharing the fate which approached the monks, whatever that might be. Both bowed reverently low to the Abbot; and while Magdalen seemed about to speak, the youth, looking towards the main entrance, at which the noise now roared most loudly, and which was at the same time assailed with much knocking, laid his hand upon his dagger.

The Abbot motioned to both to forbear: "Peace, my sister," he said, in a low tone, but which, being in a different key from the tumultuary sounds without, could be distinctly heard, even amidst the tumult;—"Peace," he said, "my sister; let the new Superior of Saint Mary's himself receive and reply to the grateful acclamations of the vassals, who come to celebrate his installation.—And thou, my son, forbear, I charge thee, to touch thy earthly weapon;—if it is the pleasure of our protectress, that her shrine be this day desecrated by deeds of violence, and polluted by blood-shedding, let it not, I charge thee, happen through the deed of a Catholic son of the church."

The noise and knocking at the outer gate became

now every moment louder; and voices were heard impatiently demanding admittance. The Abbot, with dignity, and with a step which even the emergency of danger rendered neither faltering nor precipitate, moved towards the portal, and demanded to know, in a tone of authority, who it was that disturbed their worship, and what they desired!

There was a moment's silence, and then a loud laugh from without. At length a voice replied, "We desire entrance into the church; and when the door is opened, you will soon see who we are."

"By whose authority do you require entrance?" said the Father.

"By authority of the right reverend Lord Abbot of Unreason," replied the voice from without; and, from the laugh which followed, it seemed as if there was something highly ludicrous couched under this reply.

"I know not, and seek not to know, your meaning," replied the Abbot, "since it is probably a rude one. But begone in the name of God, and leave his servants in peace. I speak this, as having lawful authority to command here."

"Open the door," said another voice, "and we will try titles with you, Sir Monk, and shew you a Superior we must all obey."

"Break open the doors if he dallies any longer," said a third, "and down with the carrion monks who would bar us of our privilege!" A general shout followed. "Ay, ay, our privilege! our privilege! down with the doors, and with the larder monks, if they make opposition!"

The knocking was now exchanged for blows with great hammers, to which the doors, strong as they were, must soon have given way. But the Abbot, who saw resistance would be in vain, and who did not wish to incense the assailants by an attempt at offering it, besought silence earnestly, and with difficulty obtained a hearing. "My children," said he, "I will save you from committing a great sin. The porter will presently undo the gate—he is gone to fetch the keys—meantime, I pray you to consider with yourselves, if you are in a state of mind to cross the holy threshold."

"Tilleyvally for your papistry!" was answered from without; "we are in the mood of the monks when they are merriest, and that is when they sup beef-brewis for lanten-kail. So, if your porter hath not the gout, let him come speedily, or we leave away readily.—Said I well, comrades?"

"Bravely said, and it shall be as bravely done," said the multitude; and had not the keys arrived at that moment, and the porter, in hasty terror, performed his office, throwing open the great door, the populace would have saved him the trouble. The instant he had done so, the affrighted janitor fled, like one who has drawn the bolts of a flood-gate, and expects to be overwhelmed by the rushing inundation. The monks, with one consent, had withdrawn themselves behind the Abbot, who alone kept his station, about three yards from the entrance, shewing no signs of fear or perturbation. His brethren—partly encouraged by his devotion, partly ashamed to desert him, and partly animated by a sense of duty—remained huddled close together at the back of their Superior. There was a loud laugh and hurra when the doors were opened;

¹ See Note F. Abbot of Unreason.

but, contrary to what might have been expected, no crowd of enraged assailants rushed into the church. On the contrary, there was a cry of "A halt! — a halt — to order, my masters! and let the two reverend fathers greet each other, as becometh them."

The appearance of the crowd who were thus called to order, was grotesque in the extreme. It was composed of men, women, and children, ludicrously disguised in various habits, and presenting groups equally diversified and grotesque. Here one fellow with a horse's head painted before him, and a tail behind, and the whole covered with a long foot-cloth, which was supposed to hide the body of the animal, ambled, cantered, pranced, and plunged, as he performed the celebrated part of the hobby-horse,¹ so often alluded to in our ancient drama; and which still flourishes on the stage in the battle that concludes Bayes's tragedy. To rival the address and agility displayed by this character, another personage advanced, in the more formidable character of a huge dragon, with gilded wings, open jaws, and a scarlet tongue, cloven at the end, which made various efforts to overtake and devour a lad, dressed as the lovely Sabina, daughter of the King of Egypt, who fled before him; while a martyr Saint George, grotesquely armed with a goblet for a helmet, and a spit for a lance, ever and anon interfered, and compelled the monster to relinquish his prey. A bear, a wolf, and one or two other wild animals, played their parts with the discretion of Snug the joiner; for the decided preference which they gave to the use of their hind legs,² was sufficient, without any formal announcement, to assure the most timorous spectators that they had to do with habitual bipeds. There was a group of outlaws, with Robin Hood and Little John at their head³ — the best representation exhibited at the time; and no great wonder, since most of the actors were, by profession, the banished men and thieves whom they presented. Other masqueraders there were, of a less marked description. Men were disguised as women, and women as men — children wore the dress of aged people, and tottered with crutch-sticks in their hands, furred gowns on their little backs, and caps on their round heads — while grandfathers assumed the infantine tone as well as the dress of children. Besides these, many had their faces painted, and wore their shirts over the rest of their dress; while coloured pasteboard and ribbons furnished out decorations for others. Those who wanted all these properties, blacked their faces, and turned their jackets inside out; and thus the transmutation of the whole assembly into a set of mad grotesque mummers, was at once completed.

The pause which the masqueraders made, waiting apparently for some person of the highest authority amongst them, gave those within the Abbey Church full time to observe all these absurdities. They were at no loss to comprehend their purpose and meaning.

Few readers can be ignorant, that at an early period, and during the plenitude of her power, the Church of Rome not only connived at, but even encouraged, such saturnalian license as the inhabitants of Kenninghairs and the neighbourhood had now in hand, and that the vulgar, on such

occasions, were not only permitted but encouraged by a number of gambols, sometimes puerile and ludicrous, sometimes immoral and profane, to indemnify themselves for the privations and penances imposed on them at other seasons. But, of all other topics for burlesque and ridicule, the rites and ceremonial of the church itself were most frequently resorted to; and, strange to say, with the approbation of the clergy themselves.

While the hierarchy flourished in full glory, they do not appear to have dreaded the consequences of suffering the people to become so irreverently familiar with things sacred; they then imagined the laity to be much in the condition of a labourer's horse, which does not submit to the bridle and the whip with greater reluctance, because, at rare intervals, he is allowed to frolic at large in his pasture, and fling out his heels in clumsy gambols at the master who usually drives him. But, when times changed — when doubt of the Roman Catholic doctrine, and hatred of their priesthood, had possessed the reformed party, the clergy discovered, too late, that no small inconvenience arose from the established practice of games and merry-makings, in which they themselves and all they held most sacred, were made the subject of ridicule. It then became obvious to duller politicians than the Romish churchmen, that the same actions have a very different tendency when done in the spirit of sarcastic insolence and hatred, than when acted merely in exuberance of rude and uncontrollable spirits. They, therefore, though of the latest, endeavoured, where they had any remaining influence, to discourage the renewal of these indecorous festivities. In this particular, the Catholic clergy were joined by most of the reformed preachers, who were more shocked at the profanity and immorality of many of these exhibitions, than disposed to profit by the ridiculous light in which they placed the Church of Rome and her observances. But it was long ere these scandalous and immoral sports could be abrogated; — the rude multitude continued attached to their favourite pastimes, and, both in England and Scotland, the mitre of the Catholic — the rochet of the reformed bishop — and the cloak and band of the Calvinistic divine — were, in turn, compelled to give place to those jocular personages, the Pope of Fools, the Boy-Bishop, and the Abbot of Unreason.⁴

It was the latter personage who now, in full costume, made his approach to the great door of the Church of St Mary's, accoutred in such a manner as to form a caricature, or practical parody, on the costume and attendants of the real Superior, whom he came to beard on the very day of his installation, in the presence of his clergy, and in the chancel of his church. The mock dignity was a stout made under-sized fellow, whose thick square form had been rendered grotesque by a supplemental paunch, well stuffed. He wore a mitre of leather, with the front like a grenadier's cap, adorned with mock embroidery, and trinkets of tin. This surmounted a visage, the nose of which was the most prominent feature, being of unusual size, and at least as richly gemmed as his head-gear. His robe was of buckram, and his cope of canvass, curiously painted, and cut into open work. On one

¹ See Note G. *The Hobby-horse.*

² See Note H. *Representation of Robin Hood and Little John.*

⁴ From the interesting novel entitled *Anastasia*, it seems the same burlesque ceremonies were practised in the Greek Church.

shoulder was fixed the painted figure of an owl; and he bore in the right hand his pastoral staff, and in the left a small mirror having a handle to it, thus resembling a celebrated jester, whose adventures, translated into English, were whilom extremely popular, and which may still be procured in black letter, for about one sterling pound per leaf.

The attendants of this mock digritary had their proper dresses and equipage, bearing the same burlesque resemblance to the officers of the Convent which their leader did to the Superior. They followed their leader in regular procession, and the motley characters, which had waited his arrival, now crowded into the church in his train, shouting as they came, — "A hall, a hall! for the venerable Father Howleglas, the learned Monk of Mierule, and the Right Reverend Abbot of Unreason!"

The discordant minstrelsy of every kind renewed its din; the boys shrieked and howled, and the men laughed and hallooed, and the women giggled and screamed, and the beasts roared, and the dragon wallopped and hissed, and the hobby-horse neighed, pranced, and capered, and the rest frisked and frolicked, clashing their hobnailed shoes against the pavement, till it sparkled with the marks of their energetic caprioles.

It was, in fine, a scene of ridiculous confusion, that deafened the ear, made the eyes giddy, and must have altogether stunned any indifferent spectator; the monks, whom personal apprehension and a consciousness that much of the popular enjoyment arose from the ridicule being directed against them, were, moreover, little comforted by the reflection, that, bold in their disguise, the mummers who whooped and capered around them, might, on slight provocation, turn their jest into earnest, or at least proceed to those practical pleasantries, which at all times arise so naturally out of the frolicsome and mischievous disposition of the populace. They looked to their Abbot amid the tumult, with such looks as landmen cast upon the pilot when the storm is at the highest — looks which express that they are devoid of all hope arising from their own exertions, and not very confident in any success likely to attend those of their *Palinurus*.

The Abbot himself seemed at a stand; he felt no fear, but he was sensible of the danger of expressing his rising indignation, which he was scarcely able to suppress. He made a gesture with his hand as if commanding silence, which was at first only replied to by redoubled shouts, and peals of wild laughter. When, however, the same motion, and as nearly in the same manner, had been made by Howleglas, it was immediately obeyed by his ridiculous companions, who expected fresh food for mirth in the conversation betwixt the real and mock Abbot, having no small confidence in the vulgar wit and impudence of their leader. Accordingly, they began to shout, "To it, fathers — to it!" — "Fight monk, fight madcap — Abbot against Abbot is fair play, and so is reason against unreason, and malice against monkery!"

"Silence, my mates!" said Howleglas; "cannot two learned Fathers of the Church hold communion together, but you must come here with your bear-garden whoop and holla, as if you were hounding forth a mastiff upon a mad bull! I say silence! and let this learned Father and me confer, touching matters affecting our mutual state and authority."

"My children" — said Father Ambrose.

"My children too, — and happy children they are!" said his burlesque counterpart; "many a wise child knows not its own father and it is well they have two to choose betwixt."

"If thou hast aught in thee, save scoffing and ribaldry," said the real Abbot, "permit me, for thine own soul's sake, to speak a few words to these misguided men."

"Aught in me but scoffing, sayest thou?" retorted the Abbot of Unreason; "why, reverend brother, I have all that becomes mine office at this time a-day — I have beef, ale, and brandy-wine, with other condiments not worth mentioning; and for speaking, man — why, speak away, and we will have turn about, like honest fellows."

During this discussion the wrath of Magdalen Grame had risen to the uttermost; she approached the Abbot, and placing herself by his side, said in a low and yet distinct tone — "Wake and arouse thee, Father — the sword of Saint Peter is in thy hand — strike and avenge Saint Peter's patrimony! — Bind them in the chains, which, being riveted by the church on earth, are riveted in Heaven —"

"Peace, sister!" said the Abbot; "let not their mad passions destroy our discretion — I ~~say~~ thee, peace, and let me do mine office. It is the first, peradventure it may be the last time, I shall be called on to discharge it."

"Nay, my holy brother!" said Howleglas, "I rede you, take the holy sister's advice — never thrive convent without woman's counsel."

"Peace, vain man!" said the Abbot; "and you my Leathren —"

"Nay, nay!" said the Abbot of Unreason, "no speaking to the lay people, until you have conferred with your brother of the cowl. I swear by bell, book, and candle, that no one of my congregation shall listen to ~~any~~ word you have to say; so you had as well address yourself to me who will."

To escape a conference so ludicrous, the Abbot again attempted an appeal to what respectful feelings might yet remain amongst the inhabitants of the Halidome, once so devoted to their spiritual Superiors. Alas! the Abbot of Unreason had only to flourish his mock crosier, and the whooping, the hallooing, and the dancing, were renewed with a vehemence which would have defied the lungs of Stentor.

"And now, my mates," said the Abbot of Unreason, "once again direct your gabs and be hushed — let us see if the Cock of Kennaquhair will fight or flee the pit!"

There was again a dead silence of expectation, of which Father Ambrose availed himself to address his antagonist, seeing plainly that he could gain an audience on no other terms. "Wretched man!" said he, "hast thou no better employment for thy carnal wit, than to employ it in leading these blind and helpless creatures into the pit of utter darkness?"

"Truly, my brother," replied Howleglas, "I can see little difference betwixt your employment and mine, save that you make a sermon of a jest, and I make a jest of a sermon."

"Unhappy being," said the Abbot, "who hast no better subject of pleasantry than that which should make thee tremble — no sounder jest than thine own sins, and no better objects for laughter than those who can absolve thee from the guilt of them!"

"Verily, my reverend brother," said the mock

Abbot, "what you say might be true, if, in laughing at hypocrites, I meant to laugh at religion. — Oh, it is a precious thing to wear a long dress, with a girdle and a cowl — we become a holy pillar of Mother Church, and a boy must not play at ball against the walls for fear of breaking a painted window!"

"And will you, my friends," said the Abbot, looking round and speaking with a vehemence which secured him a tranquil audience for some time, — "will you suffer a profane buffoon, within the very church of God, to insult his ministers? Many of you — all of you, perhaps — have lived under my holy predecessors, who were called upon to rule in this church where I am called upon to suffer. If you have worldly goods, they are their gift; and, when you scorned not to accept better gifts — the mercy and forgiveness of the Church — were they not ever at your command! — did we not pray while you were jovial — wake while you slept?"

"Some of the good wives of the Halidome were wont to say so," said the Abbot of Unreason; but his jest met in this instance but slight applause, and Father Ambrose, having gained a moment's attention, hastened to improve it.

"What!" said he; "and is this grateful — is it seemly — is it honest — to assail with scorn a few old men, from whose predecessors you hold all, and whose only wish is to die in peace among these fragments of what was once the light of the land, and whose daily prayer is, that they may be removed ere that hour comes when the last spark shall be extinguished, and the land left in the darkness which it has chosen rather than light! We have not turned against you the edge of the spiritual sword, to revenge our temporal persecution; the tempest of your wrath hath despoiled us of land, and deprived us almost of our daily food, but we have not repaid it with the thunders of excommunication — we only pray your leave to live and die within the church which is our own, invoking God, our Lady, and the Holy Saints to pardon your sins, and our own, undisturbed by scurril buffoonery and blasphemy."

This speech, so different in tone and termination, from that which the crowd had expected, produced an effect upon their feelings unfavourable to the prosecution of their frolic. The morrice-dancers stood still — the hobby-horse surceased his capering — pipe and tabor were mute, and "silence, like a heavy cloud," seemed to descend on the once noisy rabble. Several of the beasts were obviously moved to compunction; the bear could not restrain his sobs, and a huge fox was observed to wipe his eyes with his tail. But in especial the dragon, lately so formidably rampant, now relaxed the terror of his claws, uncoiled his tremendous rings, and grumbled out of his fiery throat in a repentant tone, "By the mass, I thought no harm in exercising our old pastime, but an I had thought the good Father would have taken it so to heart, I would as soon have played your devil as your dragon."

In this momentary pause, the Abbot stood amongst the miscellaneous and grotesque forms by which he was surrounded, triumphant as Saint Anthony, in Callot's Temptations; but Howleglas would not so resign his purpose.

"And how now, my masters!" said he, "is this fair play or no? Have you not chosen me Abbot

of Unreason, and is it lawful for any of you to listen to common sense to-day! Was I not formally elected by you in solemn chapter, held in Luckie Martin's change-house, and will you now desert me, and give up your old pastime and privilege! Play out the play — and he that speaks the next word of sense or reason, or bids us think or consider, or the like of that, which befits not the day, I will have him solemnly ducked in the mill-dam!"

The rabble, mutable as usual, huzzaged, the pipe and tabor struck up, the hobby-horse pranced, the beasts roared, and even the repentant dragon began again to coil up his spires, and prepare himself for fresh gambols. But the Abbot might still have overcome, by his eloquence and his entreaties, the malicious designs of the revellers, had not Dame Magdalen Graeme given loose to the indignation which she had long suppressed.

"Scoffers," she said, "and men of Belial — Blasphemous heretics, and truculent tyrants —"

"Your patience, my sister, I entreat and I command you!" said the Abbot; "let me do my duty — disturb me not in mine office!"

But Dame Magdalen continued to thunder forth her threats in the name of Popes and Councils, and in the name of every Saint, from Saint Michael downward.

"My comrades!" said the Abbot of Unreason, "this good dame hath not spoken a single word of reason, and therein may esteem herself free from the law. But what she spoke was meant for reason, and, therefore, unless she confesses and avouches all which she has said to be nonsense, it shall pass for such, so far as to injure our statutes. Wherefore, Holy dame, pilgrim, or abbess, or whatever thou art, be mute with thy mummery or beware the mill-dam. We will have neither spiritual nor temporal scolds in our Diocese of Unreason!"

As he spoke thus, he extended his hand towards the old woman, while his followers shouted, "A doom — a doom!" and prepared to second his purpose, when lo! it was suddenly frustrated. Roland Graeme had witnessed with indignation the insults offered to his old spiritual preceptor, but yet had wit enough to reflect he could render him no assistance, but might, well, by ineffective interference, make matters worse. But when he saw his aged relative in danger of personal violence, he gave way to the natural impetuosity of his temper, and, stepping forward, struck his poniard into the body of the Abbot of Unreason, whom the blow instantly prostrated on the pavement.

CHAPTER XV.

As when in tumults rise the ignoble crowd,
Mad are their motions, and their tongues are loud.
And stones and brands in rattling furies fly,
And all the rustic arms which fury can supply —
Then if some grave and pious man appear,
They hush their noise, and lend a listening ear.

Dryden's *Virgil*.

A DREADFUL shout of vengeance was raised by the revellers, whose sport was thus so fearfully interrupted; but for an instant, the want of weapons amongst the multitude, as well as the inflamed features and brandished poniard of Roland Graeme, kept them at bay, while the Abbot, horror-struck

at the violence, implored, with uplifted hands, pardon for bloodshed committed within the sanctuary. Magdalen Græme alone expressed triumph in the blow her descendant had dealt to the scoffer, mixed, however, with a wild and anxious expression of terror for her grandson's safety. "Let him perish," she said, "in his blasphemy—let him die on the holy pavement which he has insulted!"

But the rage of the multitude, the grief of the Abbot, the exultation of the enthusiastic Magdalen, were all mistimed and unnecessary. Howleglas, mortally wounded as he was supposed to be, sprang alertly up from the floor, calling aloud, "A miracle, a miracle, my masters! as brave a miracle as ever was wrought in the Kirk of Kennaquhair. And I charge you, my masters, as your lawfully chosen Abbot, that you touch no one without my command—You, wolf and bear, will guard this pragmatic youth, but without hurting him—And you, reverend brother, will, with your comrades, withdraw to your cells; for our conference has ended like all conferences, leaving each of his own mind, as before; and if we fight, both you, and your brethren, and the Kirk, will have the worst on't—Wherefore, pack up your pipes and begone."

The hubbub was beginning again to awaken, but still Father Ambrose hesitated, as uncertain to what path his duty called him, whether to face out the present storm, or to reserve himself for a better moment. His brother of Unreason observed his difficulty, and said, in a tone more natural and less affected than that with which he had hitherto sustained his character, "We came hither, my good sir, more in mischief than in mischief—our bark is worse than our mate—and, especially, we mean you no personal harm—wherefore, draw off while the play is good; for it is ill whistling for a hawk when she is once on the soar, and worse to snatch the quarry from the band-dog—Let these fellows once begin their brawl, and it will be too much for madness itself, let alone the Abbot of Unreason, to bring their back to the lure."

The brethren crowded around Father Ambrosius, and joined in urging him to give place to the torrent. The present ruvel was, they said, an ancient custom which his predecessors had permitted, and old Father Nicholas himself had played the dragon in the days of the Abbot Ingelram.

"And we now reap the fruit of the seed which they have so unadvisedly sown," said Ambrosius; "they taught men to make a mock of what is holy, what wonder that the descendants of scoffers become robbers and plunderers? But be it as thou list, my brethren—move towards the doorway—And you, dame, I command you, by the authority which I have over you, and by your respect for that youth's safety, that you go with us without farther speech—Iet, stay—what are your intentions towards that youth whom you detain prisoner?—Wot ye," he continued, addressing Howleglas in a stern tone of voice, "that he bears the livery of the House of Avenel? They who fear not the anger of Heaven, may at least dread the wrath of man."

"Cumber not yourself concerning him," answered Howleglas, "we know right well who and what he is."

"Let me pray," said the Abbot, in a tone of entreaty, "that you do him no wrong for the rash deed which he attempted in his imprudent zeal."

"I say, cumber not yourself about it, father," answered Howleglas, "but move off with your train male and female, or I will not undertake to give yonder she-saint from the ducking-stool—And as for bearing of malice, my stomach has no room for it; it is," he added, clapping his hand on his portly belly, "too well bumbasted out with straw and buckram—gramercy to them both—they kept out that madcap's dagger as well as a Milan corset could have done."

In fact, the home-driven poniard of Roland Græme had lighted upon the stuffing of the fictitious paunch, which the Abbot of Unreason wore as a part of his characteristic dress, and it was only the force of the blow which had prostrated that reverend person on the ground for a moment.

Satisfied in some degree by this man's assurances, and compelled to give way to superior force, the Abbot Ambrosius retired from the Church at the head of the monks, and left the court free for the revellers to work their will. But, wild and wilful as these rioters were, they accompanied the retreat of the religionists with none of those shouts of contempt and derision with which they had at first hailed them. The Abbot's discourse had affected some of them with remorse, others with shame, and all with a transient degree of respect. They remained silent until the last monk had disappeared through the side-door which communicated with their dwelling-place, and even then it cost some exhortations on the part of Howleglas, some caprioles of the hobby-horse, and some wallops of the dragon, to rouse once more the rebuked spirit of revelry.

"And how now, my masters?" said the Abbot of Unreason; "and wherefore look on me with such blank Jack-a-Lent visages? Will you lose your old pastime for an old wife's tale of saints and purgatory? Why, I thought you would have made all split long since—Come, strike up, labor and harp, strike up, fiddle and rebeck—dance and be merry to-day, and let care come to-morrow. Bear and wolf, look to your prisoner—prance, hobby—hiss, dragon, and halloo, boys—we grow older every moment we stand idle, and life is too short to be spent in playing momehance."

This pithy exhortation was attended with the effect desired. They fumigated the Church with burnt wool and feathers instead of incense, put foul water into the holy-water basins, and celebrated a parody on the Church-service, the mock Abbot officiating at the altar; they sung ludicrous and indecent parodies, to the tunes of church hymns; they violated whatever vestments or vessels belonging to the Abbey they could lay their hands upon; and, playing every freak which the whim of the moment could suggest to their wild caprice, at length they fell to more lasting deeds of demolition, pulled down and destroyed some carved wood-work, dashed out the painted windows which had escaped former violence, and in their rigorous search after sculpture dedicated to idolatry, began to destroy what ornaments yet remained entire upon the tombs, and around the cornices of the pillars.

The spirit of demolition, like other tastes, increases by indulgence; from these lighter attempts at mischief, the more tumultuous part of the mob began to meditate destruction on a more extended scale—"Let us heave it down altogether, the old crow's nest," became a general cry among

them; "it has served the Pope and his rooks too long;" and up they struck a ballad which was then popular among the lower classes.¹

"The Pulp, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us ever lang,
For where the blind the blind doth lead,
No marvel bauld gae wrang.
Like prince and king,
He led the sing
Of all iniquity.
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree.

"The Bishop rich, he could not preach
For sportin' with the lazes;
The silly friar behoved to flee
For awmous as he passes;
The curate his creed
He could not read,—
Shame fa' the company!
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree."

Thundering out this chorus of a notable hunting song, which had been pressed into the service of some polemical poet, the followers of the Abbot of Unreason were turning every moment more tumultuous, and getting beyond the management even of that reverend prelate himself, when a knight in full armour, followed by two or three men-at-arms, entered the church, and in a stern voice commanded them to forbear their riotous mummery.

His visor was up, but if it had been lowered, the cognizance of the holly-branch sufficiently distinguished Sir Halbert Glendinning, who, on his homeward road, was passing through the village of Kennaquhair; and moved, perhaps, by anxiety for his brother's safety, had come directly to the church on hearing of the uproar.

"What is the meaning of this," he said, "my masters! are ye Christian men, and the king's subjects, and yet waste and destroy church and chancel like so many heathens!"

All stood silent, though doubtless there were several disappointed and surprised at receiving chiding instead of thanks from so zealous a protestant.

The dragon, indeed, did at length take upon him to be spokesman, and growled from the depth of his painted maw, that they did but sweep Popery out of the church with the besom of destruction.

"What! my friends," replied Sir Halbert Glendinning, "think you this mumming and masking has not more of Popery in it than have these stone walls! Take the leprosy out of your flesh, before you speak of purifying stone walls—alate your insolent license, which leads but to idle vanity and sinful excess; and know, that what you now practise, is one of the profane and unseemly sports introduced by the priests of Rome themselves, to mislead and to brutify the souls which fell into their net."

"Marry come up—are you there with your bears!" muttered the dragon, with a draconic sullenness, which was in good keeping with his character,

"we had as good have been Romans still, if we are to have no freedom in our pastimes!"

"Dost thou reply to me so!" said Halbert Glendinning; "or is there any pastime in grovelling on the ground there like a gigantic kail-worm!—Get out of thy painted case, or, by my knighthood, I will treat you like the beast and reptile you have made yourself."

"Beast and reptile!" retorted the offended dragon, "setting aside your knighthood, I hold myself as well a born man as thyself."

The Knight made no answer in words, but bestowed two such blows with the butt of his lance on the petulant dragon, that had not the hoops which constituted the ribs of the machine been pretty strong, they would hardly have saved those of the actor from being broken. In all haste the masker crept out of his disguise, unwilling to abide a third buffet from the lance of the enraged Knight. And when the ex-dragon stood on the floor of the church, he presented to Halbert Glendinning the well-known countenance of Dan of the Howlet-hirst, an ancient comrade of his own, ere fate had raised him so high above the rank to which he was born. The clown looked sulkily upon the Knight, as if to upbraid him for his violence towards an old acquaintance, and Glendinning's own good-nature reproached him for the violence he had acted upon him.

"I did wrong to strike thee," he said, "Dan; but in truth, I knew thee not—thou wert ever a mad fellow—come to Avenel Castle, and we shall see how my hawks fly."

"And if we shew him not falcons that will mount as merrily as rockets," said the Abbot of Unreason, "I would your honour laid as hard on my bones as yoh did on his even now."

"How now, Sir Knave," said the Knight, "and what has brought you hither?"

The Abbot, hastily ridding himself of the false nose which mystified his physiognomy, and the supplementary belly which made up his disguise, stood before his master in his real character, of Adam Woodcock, the falconer of Avenel.

"How, varlet!" said the Knight; "hast thou dared to come here and disturb the very house my brother was dwelling in?"

"And it was even for that reason, craving your honour's pardon, that I came hither—for I heard the country was to be up to choose an Abbot of Unreason, and sure, thought I, I that can sing, dance, flap backwards over a broadsword, and am as good a fool as ever sought promotion, have all chance of carrying the office; and if I gain my election, I may stand his honour's brother in some stead, supposing things fall roughly out at the Kirk of Saint Mary's."

"Thou art but a cogging knave," said Sir Halbert, "and well I wot, that love of ale and brandy, besides the humour of riot and frolic, would draw thee a mile, when love of my house would not bring thee a yard. But, go to—carry thy roisterers elsewhere—to the alehouse if they list, and there are crowns to pay your charges—make out the day's madness without doing more mischief, as if be wise men to-morrow—and hereafter learn to serve a good cause better than by acting like buffoons or ruffians."

Obedient to his master's mandate, the falconer was collecting his discouraged followers, and whis-

¹ These rude rhymes are taken, with some trifling alterations, from a ballad called Trim-go-trix. It occurs in a singular collection, entitled, "A Compendious Book of Godly and Spiritual Songs, collected out of sundrie parts of the Scripture, with sundry of other ballads changed out of prophane songs, for avoiding of sin and lascivious, with Augmentation of sundrie Godly and Godly Ballads." Edinburgh, printed by Andrew Hart. This curious collection has been reprinted in Sir John Graham Dalyell's Scottish Poems of the 16th century. Edin. 1801, 2 vol.

pering into their ears—"Away, away—*tae* is Latin for a candle—never mind the good Knights puritanism—we will play the frolic out over a stand of double ale in Dame Martin the Brewster's barn-yard—draw off, harp and tabor—bagpipe and drum—mum till you are out of the church-yard, then let the welkin ring again—move on, wolf and bear—keep the hind leg till you cross the kirk-stile, and then shew yourselves beasts of mettle—what devil sent him here to spoil our holiday!—but anger him not, my hearts; his lance is no goose-feather, as Dan's ribs can tell."

"By my soul," said Dan, "had it been another than my ancient comrade, I would have made my father's old fox fly about his ears!"

"Hush! hush! man," replied Adam Woodcock, "not a word that way, as you value the safety of your bones—what man? we must take a clink as it passes, so it is not bestowed in downright ill-will."

"But I will take no such thing," said Dan of the Howlet-hirst, sullenly resisting the efforts of Woodcock, who was dragging him out of the church; when the quick military eye of Sir Halbert Glendinning detecting Roland Græme betwixt his two guards, the Knight exclaimed, "So ho! falconer, Woodcock,—knave, hast thou brought my lady's page in mine own livery, to assist at this hopeful revel of thine, with your wolves and bears? Since you were at such mummings, you might, if you would, have at least saved the credit of my household, by dressing him up as a jackanapes—bring him hither, fellows!"

Adam Woodcock was too honest and downright, to permit blarney to light upon the youth, when it was undeserved. "I swear," he said, "by Saint Martin of Bullions!"

"And what hast thou to do with Saint Martin?"

"Nay, little enough, sir, unless when he sends such rainy days that we cannot fly a hawk—but I say to your worshipful knighthood, that as I am a true man!"

"As you are a false varlet, had been the better obtestation."

"Nay, if your knighthood allows nite not to speak," said Adam, "I can hold my tongue—but the boy came not hither by my bidding, for all that."

"But to gratify his own malapert pleasure, I warrant me," said Sir Halbert Glendinning—"Come hither, young springald, and tell me whether you have your mistress's license to be so far absent from the castle, or to dishonour my livery by mingling in such May-game?"

"Sir Halbert Glendinning," answered Roland Græme with stridiness, "I have obtained the permission, or rather the commands, of your lady, to dispose of my time hereafter according to my own pleasure. I have been a most unwilling spectator of this May-game, since it is your pleasure so to call it; and I only wear your livery until I can obtain clothes which bear no such badge of servitude."

"How am I to understand this, young man?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning; "speak plainly, for I am no reader of riddles.—That my lady favoured

thee, I know. What hast thou done to disoblige her, and occasion thy dismissal?"

"Nothing to speak of," said Adam Woodcock, answering for the boy—"a foolish quarrel with me, which was more foolishly told over again to my honoured lady, cost the poor boy his place. For my part, I will say freely, that I was wrong from beginning to end, except about the washing of the eyas's meat. There I stand to it that I was right."

With that, the good-natured falconer repeated to his master the whole history of the squabble which had brought Roland Græme into disgrace with his mistress, but in a manner so favourable for the page, that Sir Halbert could not but suspect his generous motive.

"Thou art a good-natured fellow," he said, "Adam Woodcock."

"As ever had falcon upon fist," said Adam; "and, for that matter, so is Master Roland; but, being half a gentleman by his office, his blood is soon up, and so is mine."

"Well," said Sir Halbert, "be it as it will, my lady has acted hastily, for this was no great matter of offence to discard the lad whom she had trained up for years; but he, I doubt not, made it worse by his prating—it jumps well with a purpose, however, which I had in my mind. Draw off these people, Woodcock,—and you, Roland Græme, attend me."

The page followed him in silence into the Abbot's house, where, stepping into the first apartment which he found open, he commanded one of his attendants to let his brother, Master Edward Glendinning, know that he desired to speak with him. The men-at-arms went gladly off to join their comrade, Adam Woodcock, and the jolly crew whom he had assembled at Dame Martin's, the hostler's wife, and the page and Knight were left alone in the apartment. Sir Halbert Glendinning paced the floor for a moment in silence, and then thus addressed his attendant—

"Thou mayest have remarked, stripling, that I have but seldom distinguished thee by much notice;—I see thy colour rises, but do not speak till thou hearest me out. I say I have never much distinguished thee, not because I did not see that in thee which I might well have praised, but because I saw something blameable, which such praises might have made worse. Thy mistress, dealing according to her pleasure in her own household, as no one had better reason or title, had picked thee from the rest, and treated thee more like a relation than a domestic; and if thou didst shew some vanity and petulance under such distinction, it were injustice not to say that thou hast profited both in thy exercises and in thy breeding, and hast shewn many sparkles of a gentle and manly spirit. Moreover, it were ungenerous, having bred thee up freakish and fiery, to dismiss thee to want or wandering, for shewing that very peevishness and impatience of discipline which arose from thy too delicate nurture. Therefore, and for the credit of my own household, I am determined to retain thee in my train, until I can honourably dispose of thee elsewhere, with a fair prospect of thy going through the world with credit to the house that brought thee up."

If there was something in Sir Halbert Glendinning's speech which flattered Roland's pride, there

¹ *Mar*, An old-fashioned broadsword was often so called.
² The Saint Swithun, or weeping Saint of Scotland. If his festival (fourth July) prove wet, forty days of rain are expected.

was also much that, according to his mode of thinking, was an alloy to the compliment. And yet his conscience instantly told him that he ought to accept, with grateful deference, the offer which was made him by the husband of his kind protectress; and his prudence, however slender, could not but admit he should enter the world under very different auspices as a retainer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, so famed for wisdom, courage, and influence, from those under which he might partake the wanderings, and become an agent in the visionary schemes, for such they appeared to him, of Magdalen, his relative. Still, a strong reluctance to re-enter a service from which he had been dismissed with contempt, almost counterbalanced these considerations.

"Sir Halbert looked on the youth with surprise, and resumed—"You seem to hesitate, young man. Are your own prospects so inviting, that you should pause ere you accept those which I offer to you? or, must I remind you that, although you have offended your benefactress, even to the point of her dismissing you, yet I am convinced, the knowledge that you have gone unguided on your own wild way, into a world so disturbed as ours of Scotland, cannot, in the upshot, but give her sorrow and pain; from which it is, in gratitude, your duty to preserve her, no less than it is in common wisdom your duty to accept my offered protection, for your own sake, where body and soul are alike endangered, should you refuse it."

Roland Græme replied in a respectful tone, but at the same time with some spirit, "I am not ungrateful for such countenance as has been afforded me by the Lord of Avenel, and I am glad to learn, for the first time, that I have not had the misfortune to be utterly beneath his observation, as I had thought.—And it is only needful to shew me how I can testify my duty and my gratitude towards my early and constant benefactress with my life's hazard, and I will gladly peril it." He stopped.

"These are but words, young man," answered Glendinning, "large protestations are often used to supply the place of effectual service. I know nothing in which the peril of your life can serve the Lady of Avenel; I can only say, she will be pleased to learn you have adopted some course which may ensure the safety of your person, and the weal of your soul.—What ails you, that you accept not that safety when it is offered you?"

"My only relative who is alive," answered Roland, "at least the only relative whom I have ever seen, has rejoined me since I was dismissed from the Castle of Avenel, and I must consult with her whether I can adopt the line to which you now call me, or whether her increasing infirmities, or the authority which she is entitled to exercise over me, may not require me to abide with her."

"Where is this relation?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"In this house," answered the page.

"Go, then, and seek her out," said the Knight of Avenel; "more than meet it is that thou shouldst have her approbation, yet worse than foolish would she shew herself denying it."

Roland left the apartment to seek for his grandmother; and, as he retreated, the Abbot entered.

The two brothers met as brothers who loved each other fondly, yet meet rarely together. Such indeed

was the case. Their mutual affection attached them to each other; but in every pursuit, habit, or sentiment, connected with the discords of the times, the friend and counsellor of Murray stood opposed to the Roman Catholic priest; nor, indeed, could they have held very much society together, without giving cause of offence and suspicion to their confederates on each side. After a close embrace on the part of both, and a welcome on that of the Abbot, Sir Halbert Glendinning expressed his satisfaction that he had come in time to appease the riot raised by Higwiegles and his tumultuous followers.

"And yet," he said, "when I look on your garments, brother Edward, I cannot help thinking there still remains an Abbot of Unreason within the bounds of the Monastery."

"And wherefore carp at my garments, brother Halbert?" said the Abbot; "it is the spiritual armour of my calling, and, as such, becometh me as well as breastplate and baldric become your own bosom."

"Ay, but there were small wisdom, methinks, in putting on armour where we have no power to fight; it is but a dangerous temerity to defy the foe whom we cannot resist."

"For that, my brother, no one can answer," said the Abbot, "until the battle be fought; and, were it even as you say, methinks a brave man, though desperate of victory, would rather desire to fight and fall, than to resign sword and shield on some mean and dishonourable composition with his insulting antagonist. But, let not you and I make discord of a theme on which we cannot agree, but rather stay and partake, though a heretic, of my admission feast. You need not fear, my brother, that your zeal for restoring the primitive discipline of the church will, on this occasion, be offended with the rich profusion of a conventual banquet. The days of our old friend Abbot Boniface are over; and the Superior of Saint Mary's has neither forests nor fishings, woods nor pastures, nor corn-fields;—neither flocks nor herds, bucks nor wild-fowl—granaries of wheat, nor storehouses of oil and wine, of ale and of mead. The refectory's office is ended; and such a meal as a hermit in romance can offer to a wandering knight, is all we have to set before you. But, if you will share it with us, we shall eat it with a cheerful heart, and thank you, my brother, for your timely protection against these rude scoffers."

"My dearest brother," said the Knight, "it grieves me deeply I cannot abide with you; but it should bound ill for us both were one of the reformed congregation to sit down at your admission feast; and, if I can ever have the satisfaction of affording you effectual protection, it will be much owing to my remaining unsuspected of countenancing or approving your religious rites and ceremonies. It will demand whatever consideration I can acquire among my own friends, to shelter the bold man, who, contrary to law and the edicts of parliament, has dared to take up the office of Abbot of Saint Mary's."

"Trouble not yourself with the task, my brother," replied Father Ambrósio. "I would lay down my dearest blood to know that you defended the church for the church's sake; but, while you remain unhappily her enemy, I would not that you endangered your own safety, or diminished your own comforts, for the sake of my individual protection.—But

who comes hither to disturb the few minutes of fraternal communication which our evil fate allows us!"

The door of the apartment opened as the Abbot spoke, and Dame Magdalen entered.

"Who is this woman?" said Sir Halbert Glendinning, somewhat sternly, "and what does she want?"

"That you know me not," said the matron, "signifies little; I come by your own order, to give my free consent that the stripling, Roland Graeme, return to your service; and, having said so, I cumber you no longer with my presence. Peace be with you!" She turned to go away, but was stopped by the inquiries of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"Who are you!—what are you!—and why do you not await to make me answer?"

"I was," she replied, "while yet I belonged to the world, a matron of no vulgar name; now, I am Magdalen, a poor pilgrimer, for the sake of Holy Kirk."

"Yea," said Sir Halbert, "art thou a Catholic? I thought my dame said that Roland Graeme came of reformed kin."

"His father," said the matron, "was a heretic, or rather one who regarded neither orthodoxy nor heresy—neither the temple of the church or of antichrist." "I, too, for the sins of the times make sinners, have seemed to conform to your unhalloved rites—but I had my dispensation and my absolution."

"You see, brother," said Sir Halbert, with a smile of meaning towards his brother, "that we accuse you not altogether without grounds of mental equivocation."

"My brother, you do us injustice," replied the Abbot; "this woman, as her bearing may of itself warrant you, is not in her perfect mind. Thanks, I must needs say, to the persecution of your marauding barons, and of your latitudinarian clergy."

"I will not dispute the point," said Sir Halbert; "the evil of the time are unhappily so numerous, that both churches may divide them, and have enow to spare." So saying, he leaned from the window of the apartment, and winded his bugle.

"Why do you sound your horn, my brother?" said the Abbot; "we have spent but few minutes together."

"Alas!" said the elder brother, "and even these few have been sullied by disagreement. I sound to horse, my brother—the rather that, to avert the consequences of this day's rashness on your part, requires hasty efforts on mine.—Dame, you will oblige me by letting your young relative know that we mount instantly. I intend not that he shall return to Avenel with me—it would lead to new quarrels betwixt him and my household; at least to taunts, which his proud heart could ill brook, and my wish is to do him kindness. He shall, therefore, go forward to Edinburgh with one of my retinue, whom I shall send back to say what has chanced here.—You seem rejoiced at this!" he added, fixing his eyes keenly on Magdalen Graeme, who returned his gaze with calm indifference.

"I would rather," she said, "that Roland, a poor and friendless orphan, were the jest of the world at large, than of the menials at Avenel."

"Fear not, dame—he shall be scorned by neither," answered the Knight.

"It may be," she replied—"It may well be—

but I will trust more to his own bearing than to your countenance." She left the room as she spoke.

The Knight looked after her as she departed, but turned instantly to his brother, and expressing, in the most affectionate terms, his wishes for his welfare and happiness, craved his leave to depart. "My knaves," he said, "are too busy at the ale-stand, to leave their revelry for the empty breath of a bugle horn."

"You have freed them from higher restraint, Halbert," answered the Abbot, "and therein taught them to rebel against your own."

"Fear not that, Edward," exclaimed Halbert, who never gave his brother his monastic name of Ambrosius; "none obey the command of real duty so well as those who are free from the observance of slavish bondage."

He was turning to depart, when the Abbot said,—"Let us not yet part, my brother—here comes some light refreshment. Leave not the house which I must now call mine, till force expel me from it, until you have at least broken bread with me."

The poor My brother, the same who acted as porter, now entered the apartment, bearing some simple refreshment, and a flask of wine. "He had found it," he said with officious humility, "by rummaging through every nook of the cellar."

The Knight filled a small silver cup, and, quaffing it off, asked his brother to pledge him, observing, the wine was Bucharac, of the first vintage, and great age.

"Ay," said the poor lay brother, "it came out of the nook which old Brother Nicholas, (may his soul be happy!) was wont to call Abbot Ingelram's corner; and Abbot Ingelram was bred at the Convent of Wurtzburg, which I understand to be near where that choice wine grows."

"True, my reverend sir," said Sir Halbert; "and therefore I entreat my brother and you to pledge me in a cup of this orthodox vintage."

The thin old porter looked with a wishful glance towards the Abbot. "Do *veniam*," said his Superior; and the old man seized, with a trembling hand, a beverage to which he had been long unaccustomed, drained the cup with protracted delight, as if dwelling on the flavour and perfume, and set it down with a melancholy smile and shake of the head, as if bidding adieu in future to such delicious potations. The brothers smiled. But when Sir Halbert motioned to the Abbot to take up his cup and do him reason, the Abbot, in turn, shook his head, and replied—"This is no day for the Abbot of Saint Mary's to eat the fat and drink the sweet. In water from our Lady's well," he added, filling a cup with the limpid element, "I wish you, my brother, all happiness, and, above all, a true sight of your spiritual errors."

"And to you, my beloved Edward," replied Glendinning, "I wish the free exercise of your own free reason, and the discharge of more important duties than are connected with the idle game which you have so rashly assumed."

The brothers parted with deep regret; and yet, each confident in his opinion, felt somewhat relieved by the absence of one whom he respected so much, and with whom he could agree so little.

Soon afterwards the sound of the Knight of Avenel's trumpets was heard, and the Abbot went to the top of the tower, from whose dismantled

littlements he could soon see the horsemen ascending the rising ground in the direction of the draw-bridge. As he gazed, Magdalen Græme came to his side.

"Thou art come," he said, "to catch the last glimpse of thy grandson, my sister. Yonder he wends, under the charge of the best knight in Scotland, his faith ever excepted."

"Thou canst bear witness, my father, that it was no wish either of mine or of Roland's," replied the matron, "which induced the Knight of Avenel, as he is called, again to entertain my grandson in his household—Heaven, which confounds the wise with their own wisdom, and the wicked with their own power, hath placed him where, for the service of the Church, I would most wish him to be."

"I know not what you mean, my sister," said the Abbot.

"Reverend father," replied Magdalen, "hast thou never heard that there are spirits powerful to rend the walls of a castle asunder when once admitted, which yet cannot enter the house unless they are invited, nay, dragged over the threshold? Twice hath Roland Græme been thus drawn into the household of Avenel by those who now hold the tide. Let them look to the issue."

So saying she left the turret; and the Abbot, after pausing a moment on her words, which he imputed to the unsettled state of her mind, followed down the winding stair to celebrate his admission to his high office by fast and prayer instead of revelling and thanksgiving.

CHAPTER VI.

Youth! thou wear'st to manhood now.

Darker lip and darker brow,

Stellar step, more pensive mien,

In thy face, and gait are seen:

Thou must now brook midnight watches,

Take thy food and sport by snatches;

For the gambol and the jest,

Thou wert wont to love the best,

Graver follies must thou follow,

But as senseless, false, and hollow.

Be a Poet.

Young Roland Græme now trotted gaily forward in the train of Sir Halbert Glendinning. He was relieved from his most galling apprehension,—the encounter of the scorn and taunt which might possibly hail his immediate return to the Castle of Avenel. "There will be a change ere they see me again," he thought to himself; "I shall wear the coat of plate, instead of the green jerkin, and the steel morion for the bonnet and feather. They will be bold that may venture to break a gibe on the man-at-arms for the follies of the page; and I trust, that ere we return I shall have done something more worthy of note than hallooing a hound after a deer, or scrambling a crag for a kite's nest." He could not, indeed, help marvelling that his grandmother, with all her religious prejudices, leaning, it would seem, to the other side, had consented so readily to his re-entering the service of the House of Avenel; and yet more, at the mysterious joy with which she took leave of him at the Abbey.

"Heaven," said the dame, as she kissed her

young relation, and bade him farewell, "works its own work, even by the hands of those of our enemies who think themselves the strongest and the wisest. Thou, my child, be ready to act upon the call of thy religion and country; and remember each earthly bond which thou canst form is, compared to the ties which bind thee to them, like the loose flax to the twisted cable. Thou hast not forgot the face or form of the damsel Catherine Seyton?"

Roland would have replied in the negative, but the word seemed to stick in his throat, and Magdalen continued her exhortations.

"Thou must not forget her, my son; and here I intrust thee with a token, which I trust thou wilt speedily find an opportunity of delivering with care and secrecy into her own hand."

She put here into Roland's hand a very small packet, of which she again enjoined him to take the strictest care, and to suffer it to be seen by no one save Catherine Seyton, who, she again (very unnecessarily) reminded him, was the young maiden he had met on the preceding day. She then bestowed on him her solemn benediction, and bade God speed him.

There was something in her manner and her conduct which implied mystery; but Roland Græme was not of an age or temper to waste much time in endeavouring to decipher her meaning. All that was obvious to his perception in the present journey, promised pleasure and novelty. He rejoiced that he was travelling towards Edinburgh, in order to assume the character of a man, and lay aside that of a boy. He was delighted to think that he would have an opportunity of rejoining Catherine Seyton, whose bright eyes and lively manners had made so favourable an impression on his imagination; and, as an inexperienced, yet high-spirited youth, entering for the first time upon active life, his heart bounded at the thought, that he was about to see all those scenes of courtly splendour and warlike adventures, of which the followers of Sir Halbert used to boast on their occasional visits to Avenel, to the wonderment and envy of those who, like Roland, knew courts and camps only by hearsay, and were condemned to the solitary sports and almost monastic seclusion of Avenel, surrounded by its lonely lake, and embosomed among its pathless mountains. "They shall mention my name," he said to himself, "if the risk of my life can purchase me opportunities of distinction, and Catherine Seyton's saucy eye shall rest with more respect on the distinguished soldier, than that with which she laughed to scorn the raw and inexperienced page."—There was wanting but one accessory to complete the sense of rapturous excitation, and he possessed it by being once more mounted on the back of a fiery and active horse, instead of plodding along on foot, as had been the case during the preceding days.

Impelled by the liveliness of his own spirits, which so many circumstances tended naturally to exalt, Roland Græme's voice and his laughter were soon distinguished amid the trampling of the horses of the retinue, and more than once attracted the attention of their leader, who remarked with satisfaction, that the youth replied with good-humoured railery to each of the train as jested with him on his dismissal and return to the service of the House of Avenel.

"I thought the holly-branch in your bonnet had

¹ See Note I. *Inability of Evil Spirits to enter a House Uninvited.*

been blighted, Master Roland?" said one of the men-at-arms.

"Only pinched with half an hour's frost; you see it flourishes as green as ever."

"It is too grave a plant to flourish on so hot a soil as that headpiece of thine, Master Roland Græme," retorted the other, who was an old equerry of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"If it will not flourish alone," said Roland, "I will mix it with the laurel and the myrtle—and I will carry them so near the sky, that it shall make amends for their stunted growth."

Thus speaking, he dashed his spurs into his horse's sides, and, checking him at the same time, compelled him to execute a lofty caracol. Sir Halbert Glendinning looked at the demeanour of his new attendant with that sort of melancholy pleasure with which those who have long followed the pursuits of life, and are sensible of their vanity, regard the gay, young, and buoyant spirits to whom existence, as yet, is only hope and promise.

In the meanwhile, Adam Woodcock, the falconer, stripped of his masquing habit, and attire, according to his rank and calling, in a green jerkin, with a hawking-bag on the one side, and a short hanger on the other, a glove on his left hand which reached half way up his arm, and a bonnet and feather upon his head, came after the party as fast as his active little galloway-nag could trot, and immediately entered into parley with Roland Græme.

"So, my youngster, you are once more under shadow of the holly-branch!"

"And in case to repay you, my good friend," answered Roland, "your ten groats of silver."

"Which, but an hour since," said the falconer, "you had nearly paid me with ten ineffes of steel. On my faith, it is written in the book of our destiny, that I must brook your dagger, after all."

"Nay, speak not of that, my good friend," said the youth, "I would rather have broached my own bosom than yours; but who could have known you in the manning dress you wore?"

"Yes," the falconer resumed,—"for both as a poet and actor he had his own professional share of self-conceit,—“I think I was as good as Howleglas as ever played part at a Shrovetide revelry, and not a much worse Abbot of Unreason. I defy the Old Enemy to unmask me when I choose to keep my vizard on. What the devil brought the Knight on us before we had the game out? You would have heard me holla my own new ballad with a voice should have reached to Berwick. But I pray you, Master Roland, be less free of bold speech on slight occasions; since, but for the stuffing of thy reverend doublet, I had only left thee kirk to take my place in the kirkyard."

"Nay, spare me that feud," said Roland Græme, "we shall have no time to fight it out; for, by our lord's command, I am bound for Edinburgh."

"I know it," said Adam Woodcock, "and even therefore we shall have time to solder up this rent by the way, for Sir Halbert has appointed me your companion and guide."

"Ay? and with what purpose?" said the page.

"That," said the falconer, "is a question I cannot answer; but I know, that be the food of the eyes washed or unwashed, and, indeed, whatever becomes of parch and mew, I am to go with you to Edinburgh, and see you safely delivered to the Regent at Holyrood."

"How, to the Regent?" said Roland, in surprise.

"Ay, by my faith, to the Regent," replied Woodcock; "I promise you, that if you are not to enter his service, at least you are to wait upon him in the character of a retainer of our Knight of Avenel."

"I know no right," said the youth, "which the Knight of Avenel hath to transfer my service, supposing that I owe it to himself."

"Hush, hush!" said the falconer; "that is a question I advise no one to stir in until he has the mountain or the lake, or the march of another kingdom, which is better than either, betwixt him and his feudal superior."

"But Sir Halbert Glendinning," said the youth, "is not my feudal superior; nor has he aught of authority—"

"I pray you, my son, to rein your tongue," answered Adam Woodcock; "my lord's displeasure, if you provoke it, will be worse to appease than my lady's. The touch of his least finger were heavier than her hardest blow. And, by my faith, he is a man of steel, as true and as pure, but as hard and as pitiless. You remember the Cock of Capperlaw, whom he hanged over his gate for a mere mistake—a poor yoke of oxen taken in Scotland, when he thought he was taking them in English land? I loved the Cock of Capperlaw; the Kerrs had no other honest man in their clan, and they have had men that might have been a pattern to the Border—men that would not have lifted under twenty cows at once, and would have held themselves dishonoured if they had taken a drift of sheep, or the like, but always managed their raids in full credit and honour.—But see, his worship halts, and we are close by the bridge. Ride up—ride up—we must have his last instructions."

It was as Adam Woodcock said. In the hollow way descending towards the bridge, which was still in the guardianship of Peter Bridgeward, as he was called, though he was now very old, Sir Halbert Glendinning halted his retinue, and beckoned to Woodcock and Græme to advance to the head of the train.

"Woodcock," said he, "thou knowest to whom thou art to conduct this youth. And thou, young man, obey discreetly and with diligence the orders that shall be given thee. Curb thy vain and peevish temper. Be just, true, and faithful; and there is in thee that which may raise thee many a degree above thy present station. Neither shalt thou—always supposing thine efforts to be fair and honest—want the protection and countenance of Avenel."

Leaving them in front of the bridge, the centre tower of which now began to cast a prolonged shade upon the river, the Knight of Avenel turned to the left, without crossing the river, and pursued his way towards the chain of hills within whose recesses are situated the Lake and Castle of Avenel. There remained behind, the falconer, Roland Græme, and a domestic of the Knight, of inferior rank, who was left with them to look after their horses while on the road, to carry their baggage, and to attend to their convenience.

So soon as the more numerous body of riders had turned off to pursue their journey westward, those whose route lay across the river, and was directed towards the north, summoned the Bridgeward, and demanded a free passage.

"I will not lower the bridge," answered Peter,

is a voice querulous with age and ill-humour. —

"Come Papist, come Protestant, ye are all the same. The Papist threatened us with Purgatory, and fleeced us with pardons — the Protestant mints at us with his sword, and coddles us with the liberty of conscience; but never a one of either says, 'Peter, there is your penny.' I am well tired of all this, and for no man shall the bridge fall that pays me not ready money; and I would have you know I care as little for Geneva as for Rome — as little for homilies as for pardons; and the silver pennies are the only passports I will hear of."

"Here is a proper old chuff!" said Woodcock to his companion; then raising his voice, he exclaimed, "Hark thee, dog — Bridgeward, villain, dost thou think we have refused thy namesake Peter's pence to Rome, to pay thine at the Bridge of Kennahair? Let thy bridge down instantly to the followers of the house of Avenel, or by the hand of my father, and that handled many a bridle rein, for he was a bluff Yorkshireman — I say, by my father's hand, our Knight will blow thee out of thy solan goose's nest there in the middle of the water, with the high falconet which we are bringing southward from Edinburgh to-morrow."

The Bridgeward heard, and muttered, "A plague on falcon and falconet, on cannon and demicannon, and all the barking bull-dogs whom they halloo against stone and lime in these our days! It was a merry time when there was little besides landy blows, and it may be a flight of arrows that harped an ashler wall as little as so many hailstones. But we must jouk and let the jaw gang by." Comforting himself in his state of diminished consequence with this pithy old proverb, Peter Bridgeward lowered the drawbridge, and permitted them to pass over. At the sight of his white hair, albeit it discovered a visage equally peevish through age and misfortune, Roland was inclined to give him an alma, but Adam Woodcock prevented him. "E'en let him pay the penalty of his former churlishness and greed," he said; "the wolf, when he has lost his teeth, should be treated no better than a cur."

Leaving the Bridgeward to lament the alteration of times, which sent domineering soldiers and feudal retainers to his place of passage, instead of peaceful pilgrims, and reduced him to become the oppressed, instead of playing the extortioner, the travellers turned them northward; and Adam Woodcock, well acquainted with that part of the country, proposed to cut short a considerable portion of the road, by traversing the little vale of Glendearg, so famous for the adventures which befell therein during the earlier part of the Benedictine's manuscript. With these, and with the thousand commentaries, representations, and misrepresentations, to which they had given rise, Roland Græme was, of course, well acquainted; for in the Castle of Avenel, as well as in other great establishments, the inmates talked of nothing so often, or with such pleasure, as of the private affairs of their lord and lady. But while Roland was viewing with interest these haunted scenes, in which things were said to have passed beyond the ordinary laws of nature, Adam Woodcock was still regretting in his secret soul the unfinished revel and the unsung ballad, and kept every now and then breaking out with some such verses as these: —

"The Friars of Fall drank berry-brown ale,
The best that o'er was tasted;
The Monks of Melrose made rude rule
On Fridays, when they fasted.
Saint Morance's sister,
The gray priest kist her —
Fiend save the company!
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree."

"By my hand, friend Woodcock," said the page, "though I know you for a hardy gospeller, that fear neither saint nor devil, yet, if I were you, I would not sing your profane songs in this valley of Glendearg, considering what has happened here before our time."

"A straw for your wandering spirits!" said Adam Woodcock; "I misdid them no more than an earn cares for a string of wild-geese — they have all fled since the pulpits were filled with honest men, and the people's ears with sound doctrine. Nay, I have a touch at them in my ballad, as I had but had the good luck to have it sung to end;" and again he set off in the same key:

"From haunted spring and grassy ring,
Troop goblin, elf, and fairy;
And the kelpie must fit from the black bog-pit,
And the brownie must not tarry;
To Limbo-lake,
Their way they take,
With scarce the pith to flee.
Sing hay trix, trim-go-trix,
Under the greenwood tree."

I think," he added, "that could Sir Halbert's patience have stretched till we came that length, he would have had a hearty laugh, and that is what he seldom enjoys."

"If it be all true that men tell of his early life," said Roland, "he has less right to laugh at goblins than most men."

"Ay, if it be all true," answered Adam Woodcock; "but who can ensure us of that! Moreover, these were but tales the monks used to gull us simple laymen withal; they knew that fairies and hobgoblins brought ayes and paternosters into repute; but, now we have given up worship of images in wood and stone, methinks it were no time to be afraid of bubbles in the water, or shadows in the air."

"However," said Roland Græme, "as the Catholics say they do not worship wood or stone, but only as emblems of the holy saints, and not as things holy in themselves —"

"Pshaw! pshaw!" answered the falconer; "a rush for their prating. They told us another story when these baptized idols of theirs brought pikes, axes and sandalled shoon from all the four winds, and whistled the old women out of their corn and their candle ends, and their butter, bacon, wool, and cheese, and when not so much as a gray gnat escaped tithing."

Roland Græme had been long taught, by necessity, to consider his form of religion as a profound secret, and to say nothing whatever in its defence when assailed, lest he should draw on himself the suspicion of belonging to the unpopular and exploded church. He therefore suffered Adam Woodcock to triumph without farther opposition, marvelling in his own mind whether any of the goblins, formerly such active agents, would avenge his rude raillery before they left the valley of Glendearg. But no such consequences followed. They passed the night quietly in a cottage in the glen, and the next day resumed their route to Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XVII.

Edina! Scotia's darling seat,
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once, beneath a monarch's feet,
Sate legislation's sovereign powers.

Byron.

"THIS, then, is Edinburgh!" said the youth, as the fellow-travellers arrived at one of the heights to the southward, which commanded a view of the great northern capital—"This is that Edinburgh of which we have heard so much!"

"Even so," said the falconer; "yonder stands Auld Reekie—you may see the smoke hover over her at twenty miles' distance, as the goss-hawk hangs over a plump of young wild-ducks—ay, yonder is the heart of Scotland, and each thro' that she gives, is felt from the edge of Sdway to Duncan's-bay-head. See, yonder is the old Castle; and see to the right, on yon rising ground, that is the Castle of Craigmillar, which I have known a merry place in my time."

"Was it not there," said the page in a low voice, "that the Queen held her court?"

"Ay, ay," replied the falconer, "Queen she was then, though you must not call her so now. Well, they may say what they will—many a true heart will be sad for Mary Stewart, e'en if all be true men say of her; for look you, Master Roland—she was the loveliest creature to look upon that I ever saw with eye, and no lady in the land liked better the fair flight of a falcon. I was at the great match on Roslin Moor betwixt Bothwell—he was a black sight to her that Bothwell—and the Baron of Roslin, who could judge a hawk's flight as well as any man in Scotland—a butt of Rhenish and a ring of gold was the wager, and it was flown as fairly for as ever was red gold and bright wine. And to see her there on her white palfrey, that flew as if it scorned to touch more than the heather blossom; and to hear her voice, as clear and sweet as the mavis's whistle, mix among our jolly whooping and whistling; and to mark all the nobles dashing round her; happiest he who got a word of a look—tearing through moss and hagg, and venturing neck and limb to gain the praise of a bold rider, and the blink of a bonny Queen's bright eye!—she will see little hawking where she lies now—ay, ay, pomp and pleasure pass away as speedily as the wap of a falcon's wing."

"And where is this poor Queen now confined?" said Roland Græme, interested in the fate of a woman whose beauty and grace had made so strong an impression even on the blunt and careless character of Adam Woodcock.

"Where is she now imprisoned?" said the latest Aitán; "why, in some castle in the north, they say—I know not where, for my part, nor is it worth while to vex one's self about what cannot be mended—An she had guided her power well whilst she had it, she had not come to so evil a pass. Men say she must resign her crown to this little baby of a prince, for that they will trust her with it no longer. Our muster has been as busy as his neighbours in all this work. If the Queen should come to her own again, Avenel Castle is like to smoke for it, unless he makes his bargain all the better."

"In a castle in the north Queen Mary is confined!" said the page.

"Why, ay—they say so, at least—in a castle beyond that great river which comes down yonder, and looks like a river, but it is a branch of the sea, and as bitter as brine."

"And amongst all her subjects," said the page, with some emotion, "is there none that will adventure anything for her relief?"

"That is a kittle question," said the falconer, "and if you ask it often, Master Roland, I am fain to tell you that you will be mewed up yourself in some of those castles, if they do not prefer twisting your head off, to save farther trouble with you—Adventure any thing? Lord, why, Murray has the wind in his poop now, man, and flies so high and strong, that the devil a wing of them can match him—No, no; there she is, and there she must lie, till Heaven send her deliverance, or till her son has the management of all—But Murray will never let her loose again, he knows her too well.—And hark thee, we are now bound for Holyrood, where thou wilt find plenty of news, and of courtiers to tell it—But, take my counsel, and keep a calm sough, as the Scots say—hear every man's counsel, and keep your own. And if you hap to learn thy news you like, leap not up as if you were to get on armour direct in the cause—Our old Mr Wingate says—and he knows court-cattle well—that if you are told old King Coull is come alive again, you should turn it off with, 'And is he in truth?—I heard not of it,' and should seem no more moved, than if one told you, by way of novelty, that old King Coull was dead and buried. Wherefore, look well to your bearing, Master Roland, for, I promise you, you come among a generation that are keen as a hungry hawk—And never be dagger out of sheath at every wry word you hear spoken; for you will find as hot blades as yourself, and then will be letting of blood without advice either of leech or almanack."

"You shall see how staid I will be, and how cautious, my good friend," said Græme; "but, blessed Lady, what goodly house is that which is lying all in ruins so close to the city? Have they been playing at the Abbot of Unreason here, and ended the gambol by burning the church?"

"There again now," replied his companion, "you go down the wind like a wild haggard, that minds neither lure nor beck—that is a question you should have asked in as low a tone as I shall answer it."

"If I stay here long," said Roland Græme, "it is like I shall lose the nature! use of my voice—but what are the ruins then?"

"The Kirk of Field," said the falconer, in a low and impressive whisper, laying at the same time his finger on his lip; "ask no more about it—somebody got foul play, and somebody got the blame of it; and the game began there which perhaps may not be played out in our time.—Poor Henry Darnley! to be an ass, he understood somewhat of a hawk; but they sent him on the wing through the air himself one bright moonlight night."

The memory of this catastrophe was so recent, that the page averted his eyes with horror from the scathed ruins in which it had taken place; and the accusations against the Queen, to which it had given rise, came over his mind with such strength as to balance the compassion he had begun to entertain for her present forlorn situation.

It was, indeed, with that agitating state of mind which arises partly from horror, but more from

anxious interest and curiosity, that young Graeme found himself actually traversing the scene of those tremendous events, the report of which had disturbed the most distant solitudes in Scotland, like the echoes of distant thunder rolling among the mountains.

"Now," he thought, "now or never shall I become a man, and bear my part in those deeds which the simple inhabitants of our hamlets repeat to each other as if they were wrought by beings of a superior order to their own. I will know now, wherefore the Knight of Avenel carries his crest so much above those of the neighbouring baronage, and how it is that men, by valour and wisdom, work their way from the hodding-gray coat to the cloak of scarlet and gold. Men say I have not much wisdom to recommend me; and if that be true, courage must do it; for I will be a man amongst living men, or a dead corpse amongst the dead."

From these dreams of ambition he turned his thoughts to those of pleasure, and began to form many conjectures, when and where he should see Catherine Seyton, and in what manner their acquaintance was to be renewed. With such conjectures he was amusing himself, when he found that they had entered the city, and all other feelings were suspended in the sensation of giddy astonishment with which an inhabitant of the country is affected, when, for the first time, he finds himself in the streets of a large and populous city, a unit in the midst of thousands.

The principal street of Edinburgh was then, as now, one of the most spacious in Europe. The extreme height of the houses, and the variety of Gothic gables and battlements, and balconies, by which the sky-line on each side was crowned and terminated, together with the width of the street itself, might have struck with surprise a more practised eye than that of young Graeme. The population, close packed within the walls of the city, and at this time increased by the number of the lords of the King's party who had thronged to Edinburgh to wait upon the Regent Murray, absolutely swarmed like bees on the wide and stately street. Instead of the shop-windows, which are now calculated for the display of goods, the traders had their open booths projecting on the street, in which, as in the fashion of the modern bazars, all was exposed which they had upon sale. And though the commodities were not of the richest kinds, yet Graeme thought he beheld the wealth of the whole world in the various baes of Flanders cloths, and the specimens of tapestry; and, at other places, the display of domestic utensils, and pieces of plate struck him with wonder. The sight of cutlers' booths, furnished with swords and poniards, which were manufactured in Scotland, and with pieces of defensive armour, imported from Flanders, added to his surprise; and, at every step, he found so much to admire and to gaze upon, that Adam Woodcock had no little difficulty in prevailing on him to advance through such a scene of enchantment.

The sight of the crowds which filled the streets was equally a subject of wonder. Here a gay lady, in her muffler, or silken veil, traced her way delicately, a gentleman usher making way for her, a page bearing up her train, and a waiting gentlewoman carrying her Bible, thus intimating that her purpose was towards the church—There he might see a group of citizens bending the same way, with

their short Flemish cloaks, wide trowsers, and high-waisted doublets, a fashion to which, as well as to their bonnet and feather, the Scots were long faithful. Then, again, came the clergyman himself, in his black Geneva cloak and band, lending a grave and attentive ear to the discourse of several persons who accompanied him, and who were doubtless holding serious converse on the religious subject he was about to treat of. Nor did there lack passengers of a different class and appearance.

At every turn, Roland Graeme might see a gallant ruffie along in the newer or French mode, his doublet slashed, and his points of the same colours with the lining, his long sword on one side, and his poniard on the other, behind him a body of stout serving-men, proportioned to his estate and quality, all of whom walked with the air of military retainers, and were armed with sword and buckler, the latter being a small round shield, not unlike the Highland target, having a steel spike in the centre. Two of these parties, each headed by a person of importance, chanced to meet in the very centre of the street, or, as it was called, "the crown of the causeway," a poet of honour as tenaciously asserted in Scotland, as that of giving or taking the wall used to be in the more southern part of the island. The two leaders being of equal rank, and most probably, either animated by political dislike, or by recollection of some feudal enmity, marched close up to each other, without yielding an inch to the right or the left; and neither shewing the least purpose of giving way, they stopped for an instant, and then drew their swords. Their followers imitated their example; about a score of weapons at once flashed in the sun, and there was an immediate clatter of swords and bucklers, while the followers on either side cried their master's name; the one shouting "Help, a Leslie! a Leslie!" while the others answered with shouts of "Seyton! Seyton!" with the additional punning slogan, "Set on, set on—bear the knaves to the ground!"

If the falconer found difficulty in getting the page to go forward before, it was now perfectly impossible. He reined up his horse, clapped his hands, and, delighted with the fray, cried and shouted as fast as any of those who were actually engaged in it.

The noise and cries thus arising on the Highgate, as it was called, drew into the quarrel two or three other parties of gentlemen and their servants, besides some single passengers, who, hearing a fray betwixt these two distinguished names, took part in it, either for love or hatred.

The combat became now very sharp, and although the sword-and-buckler men made more clatter and noise than they did real damage, yet several good cuts were dealt among them; and those who wore rapier, a more formidable weapon than the ordinary Scottish sword, gave and received dangerous wounds. Two men were already stretched on the causeway, and the party of Seyton began to give ground, being much inferior in number to the other, with which several of the citizens had united themselves, when young Roland Graeme, beholding their leader, a noble gentleman, fighting bravely, and hard pressed with numbers, could withhold no longer. "Adam Woodcock," he said, "an you be a man, draw, and let us take part with the Seyton." And, without waiting a reply, or listening to the falconer's earnest entreaty, that he would leave alone

a strife in which he had no concern, the fiery youth springing from his horse, drew his short sword, and shouting like the rest, "A Scytol! a Seyton! Set on! Set on!" thrust forward into the throng, and struck down one of those who was pressing hardest upon the gentleman whose cause he espoused. This sudden reinforcement gave spirit to the weaker party, who began to renew the combat with much alacrity, when four of the magistrates of the city, distinguished by their velvet cloaks and gold chains, came up with a guard of halberdiers and citizens, armed with long weapons, and well accustomed to such service, thrust boldly forward, and compelled the swordsmen to separate, who immediately retreated in different directions, leaving such of the wounded on both sides, as had been disabled in the fray, lying on the street.

The falconer, who had been tearing his beard for anger at his comrade's rashness, now rode up to him with the horse which he had caught by the bridle, and accosted him with "Master Roland - master goose - master madcap - will it please you to get on horse, and budge! or will you remain here to be carried to prison, and made to answer for this pretty day's work?"

The page, who had begun his retreat along with the Seytons, just as if he had been one of their natural allies, was by this unceremonious application made sensible that he was acting a foolish part; and, obeying Adam Woodcock, with some sense of shame, he sprung actively on horseback, and upsetting with the shoulder of the animal a city-officer, who was making toward him, he began to ride smartly down the street, along with his companion, and was quickly out of the reach of the hue and cry. In fact, rencounters of the kind were so common in Edinburgh at that period, that the disturbance seldom excited much attention after the affray was over, unless some person of consequence chanced to have fallen, an incident which imposed on his friends the duty of avenging his death on the first convenient opportunity. A feeble, indeed, was the arm of the police, that it was not unusual for such skirmishes to last for hours, where the parties were numerous and well matched. But at this time the Regent, a man of great strength of character, aware of the mischief which usually arose from such acts of violence, had prevailed with the magistrates to keep a constant guard on foot, for preventing or separating such affrays as had happened in the present case.

The falconer and his young companion were now riding down the Canongate, and had slackened their pace to avoid attracting attention, the latter that there seemed to be no appearance of pursuit. Roland hung his head as one who was conscious his conduct had been none of the wisest, whilst his companion thus addressed him:

"Will you be pleased to tell me one thing, Master Roland Græme, and that is, whether there be a devil incarnate in you or no?"

"Truly, Master Adam Woodcock," answered the page, "I would fain hope there is not."

"Then," said Adam, "I would fain know by what other influence or instigation you are perpetually at one end or the other of some bloody tragedy! What, I pray, had you to do with these Seytons and Leslie, that you never heard the names of in your life before?"

"You are out there, my friend," said Roland

Græme, "I have my own reasons for being a friend to the Seytons."

"They must have been very secret reasons then," answered Adam Woodcock, "for I think I could have wagered, you had never known one of the name; and I am apt to believe still, that it was your unhallowed passion for that clashing of cold iron, which has as much charm for you as the clatter of a brass pan hath for a hive of bees, rather than any care either for Seyton or for Leslie, that persuaded you to thrust your fool's head into a quarrel that no ways concerned you. But take this for a warning, my young master, that if you are to draw sword with every man who draws sword on the High-gate here, it will be scarce worth your while to sheathe the bilbo again for the rest of your life, since, if I guess rightly, it will scarce endure on such terms for many hours - all which I leave to your serious consideration."

"By my word, Adam, I honour your advice; and I promise you, that I will practise by it as faithfully as if I were sworn apprentice to you, to the trade and mystery of bearing myself with all wisdom and safety through the new paths of life that I am about to be engaged in."

"And therein you will do well," said the falconer; "and I do not quarrel with you, Master Roland, for having a grain over much spirit, because I know one may bring to the hand a wild hawk which one never can a dunghill hen - and so betwixt two faults you have the best on't. But besides your peculiar genius for quarreling and lugging out your side companion, my dear Master Roland, you have also the gift of peering under every woman's muffler and screen, as if you expected to find an old acquaintance. Though were you to spy one, I should be as much surprised at it well wotting, how few you have seen of these same wild-fowl, as I was at your taking so deep an interest even now in the Seyton."

"That, man! nonsense and folly," answered Roland Græme, "I but sought to see what eyes these gentle fowls have got under their hood."

"Ay, but it's a dangerous subject of inquiry," said the falconer; "you had better hold out your bare wrist for an eagle to perch upon. - Look you, Master Roland, these pretty wild-geese cannot be hawked at without risk - they have as many divings, boltings, and volleyings, as the most game some quarry that falcon ever flew at - And besides, every woman of them is manned with her husband, or her kind friend, or her brother, or her cousin, or her sworn servant at the least - But you heed me not, Master Roland, though I know the game so well - your eye is all on that pretty damsel who trips down the gate before us - by my certes, I will warrant her a blithe dancer either in reel or revel - a pair of silver morisco bells would become these pretty ankles as well as the jesses would suit the fairest Norway hawk."

"Thou art a fool, Adam," said the page, "and I care not a button about the girl or her ankles - But, what the foul fiend, one must look at something!"

"Very true, Master Roland Græme," said his guide, "but let me pray you to choose your objects better. Look you, there is scarce a woman walks this High-gate with a silk screen or a pearlyl muffler, but, as I said before, she has either gentleman-usher before her, or kinsman, or lover, or

husband, at her elbow, or it may be a brace of stout fellows with sword and buckler, not so far behind but what they can follow close.—But you heed me no more than a goshawk minds a yellow yoldring."

"O yes, I do—I do mind you indeed," said Roland Græme; "but hold my nag a bit—I will be with you in the exchange of a whistle." So saying, and ere Adam Woodcock could finish the sermon which was dying on his tongue, Roland Græme, to the falconer's utter astonishment, threw him the bridle of his jennet, jumped off horseback, and pursued down one of the closes or narrow lanes, which, opening under a vault, terminated upon the main-street, the very maiden to whom his friend had accused him of shewing so much attention, and who had turned down the pass in question.

"Saint Mary, Saint Magdalen, Saint Benedict, Saint Barnabas!" said the poor falconer, when he found himself thus suddenly brought to a pause in the midst of the Canongate, and saw his young charge start off like a madman in quest of a damsel whom he had never, as Adam supposed, seen in his life before.—"Saint Satan and Saint Beelzebub—for this would make one swear saint and devil—what can have come over the lad, with a wanton! And what shall I do the whilst!—he will have his throat cut, the poor lad, as sure as I was born at the foot of Roseberry-Topping. Could I find some one to hold the horses! but they are as sharp here north-away as in canny Yorkshire herself, and quit bridle, quit titt, as we say. An I could but see one of our folks now, a holly-sprig were worth a gold tassel; or could I but see one of the Regent's men—but to leave the horses to a stranger, that I cannot—and to leave the place while the lad is in jeopardy, that I wonot."

We must leave the falconer, however, in the midst of his distress, and follow the hot-headed youth who was the cause of his perplexity.

The latter part of Adam Woodcock's sage remonstrance had been in a great measure lost upon Roland, for whose benefit it was intended; because, in one of the female forms which tripped along the street, muffled in a veil of striped silk, like the women of Brussels at this day, his eye had discerned something which closely resembled the exquisite shape and spirited bearing of Catherine Seyton.—During all the grave advice which the falconer was diffusing in his ears, his eye continued intent upon so interesting an object of observation; and at length, as the damsel, just about to dive under one of the arched passages which afforded an outlet to the Canongate from the houses beneath, (a passage, graced by a projecting shield of arms, supported by two huge foxes of stone,) had lifted her veil for the purpose perhaps of decyphering who the horseman was who for some time had eyed her so closely, young Roland saw, under the shade of the silken plaid, enough of the bright azure eyes, fair locks, and blithe features, to induce him, like an inexperienced and rash madcap, whose wilful ways never had been traversed by contradiction, nor much subjected to consideration, to throw the bridle of his horse into Adam Woodcock's hand, and leave him to play the waiting gentleman, while he dashed down the paved court after Catherine Seyton—all as aforesaid.

Women's wits are proverbially quick, but appa-

rently those of Catherine suggested no better expedient than fairly to betake herself to speed of foot, in hopes of baffling the page's vivacity, by getting safely lodged before he could discover where. But a youth of eighteen, in pursuit of a mistress, is not so easily outstripped. Catherine fled across a paved court, decorated with large formal vases of stone, in which yews, cypresses, and other evergreens, vegetated in sombre sullenness, and gave a corresponding degree of solemnity to the high and heavy building in front of which they were placed as ornaments, aspiring towards a square portion of the blue hemisphere, corresponding exactly in extent to the quadrangle in which they were stationed, and all around which rose huge black walls, exhibiting windows in rows of five stories, with heavy architraves over each, bearing armorial and religious devices.

Through this court Catherine Seyton flashed like a hunted doe, making the best use of those pretty legs which had attracted the commendation even of the reflective and cautious Adam Woodcock. She hastened towards a large door in the centre of the lower front of the court, pulled the bobbin till the latch flew up, and ensconced herself in the ancient mansion. But, if she fled like a doe, Roland Græme followed with the speed and agdour of a youthful stag-hound, loosed for the first time on his prey. He kept her in view in spite of her efforts; for it is remarkable what an advantage, in such a race, the gallant who desires to see, possesses over the maiden who wishes not to be seen—an advantage which I have known counterbalance a great start in point of distance. In short, he saw the waving of her screen, or veil, at one corner, heard the tap of her foot, light as that was, as it crossed the court, and caught a glimpse of her figure just as she entered the door of the mansion.

Roland Græme, inconsiderate and headlong as we have described him, having no knowledge of real life but from the romances which he had read, and not an idea of checking himself in the midst of any eager impulse; possessed, besides, of much courage and readiness, never hesitated for a moment to approach the door through which the object of his search had disappeared. He, too, pulled the bobbin, and the latch, though heavy and massive, answered to the summons, and arose. The page entered with the same precipitation which had marked his whole proceeding, and found himself in a large gloomy hall, or vestibule, dimly enlightened by latticed creements of painted glass, and rendered yet dimmer through the exclusion of the sunbeams, owing to the height of the walls of those buildings by which the court-yard was enclosed. The walls of the hall were surrounded with suits of ancient and rusted armour, interchanged with huge and massive stone scutcheons, bearing double treasures, fleured and counter-fleured, wheat-sheaves, coronets, and so forth, things to which Roland Græme gave not a moment's attention.

In fact, he only deigned to observe the figure of Catherine Seyton, who, deeming herself safe in the hall, had stopped to take breath after her course, and was reposeing herself for a moment on a large oaken settle which stood at the upper end of the hall. The noise of Roland's entrance at once disturbed her; she started up with a faint scream of surprise, and escaped through one of the several folding-doors which opened into this apartment as

a common centre. This door, which Roland Græme instantly approached, opened on a large and well-lighted gallery, at the upper end of which he could hear several voices, and the noise of hasty steps approaching towards the hall or vestibule. A little recalled to sober thought by an appearance of serious danger, he was deliberating whether he should stand fast or retire, when Catherine Seyton re-entered from a side door, running towards him with as much speed as a few minutes since she had fled from him.

"Oh, what mischief brought you hither?" she said; "fly—fly, or you are a dead man,—or stay—they come—flight is impossible—say you came to ask for Lord Seyton."

She sprang from him and disappeared through the door by which she had made her second appearance; and, at the same instant, a pair of large folding-doors at the upper end of the gallery flew open with vehemence, and six or seven young gentlemen, richly dressed, pressed forward into the apartment, having, for the greater part, their swords drawn.

"Who is it," said one, "dare intrude on us in our own mansion?"

"Cut him to pieces," said another; "let him pay for this day's insolence and violence—he is some follower of the Rother."

"No, by Saint Mary," said another; "he is a follower of the arch-fiend and ennobled clown Halbert Glendinning, who takes the style of Avenel—once a church-vassal, now a pillager of the church."

"It is so," said a fourth; "I know him by the holly-sprig, which is his cognizance. Secure the door, he must answer for this insolence."

Two of the gallants, hastily drawing their weapons, passed on to the door by which Roland had entered the hall, and stationed themselves there as if to prevent his escape. The others advanced on Græme, who had just sense enough to perceive that any attempt at resistance would be alike fruitless and imprudent. At once, and by various voices, none of which sounded amicably, the page was required to say who he was, whence he came, his name, his errand, and who sent him hither. The number of the questions demanded of him at once, afforded a momentary apology for his remaining silent, and ere that brief truce had elapsed, a personage entered the hall, at whose appearance those who had gathered fiercely around Roland, fell back with respect.

This was a tall man, whose dark hair was already grizzled, though his eye and haughty features retained all the animation of youth. The upper part of his person was undressed to his Holland shirt, whose ample folds were stained with blood. But he wore a mantle of crimson, lined with rich fur, cast around him, which supplied the deficiency of his dress. On his head he had a crimson velvet bonnet, looped up on one side with a small golden chain of many links, which, going thrice around the hat, was fastened by a medal agreeable to the fashion amongst the grandees of the time.

"Whom have you here, sons and kinsmen," said he, "around whom you crowd thus roughly!—Knew you not that the shelter of this roof should secure every one fair treatment, who shall come hither either in fair peace, or in open and manly hostility?"

"But here, my lord," answered one of the youths, "is a knave who comes on treacherous espial!"

"I deny the charge!" said Roland Græme, boldly, "I came to inquire after my Lord Seyton."

"A likely tale," answered his accusers, "in the mouth of a follower of Glendinning."

"Stay, young men," said the Lord Seyton, for it was that nobleman himself, "let me look at this youth—By heaven, it is the very same who came so boldly to my side not very many minutes since, when some of my own knaves bore themselves with more respect to their own worshipful safety than to mine! Stand back from him, for he well deserves honour and a friendly welcome at your hands, instead of this rough treatment."

They fell back on all sides, obedient to Lord Seyton's commands, who, taking Roland Græme by the hand, thanked him for his prompt and gallant assistance, adding, that he nothing doubted, "the same interest which he had taken in his cause in the affray, brought him hither to inquire after his hurt."

Roland bowed low in acquiescence.

"Or is there any thing in which I can serve you, to shew my sense of your ready gallantry?"

But the page, thinking it best to abide by the apology for his visit which the Lord Seyton had so aptly himself suggested, replied, "that to be assured of his lordship's safety, had been the only cause of his intrusion. He judged," he added, "he had seen him receive some hurt in the affray."

"A trifle," said Lord Seyton; "I had but stripped my doublet, that the chirurgeon might put some dressing on the paltry scratch, when these rash boys interrupted us with their clamour."

Roland Græme, making a low obeisance, was now about to depart, for, relieved from the danger of being treated as a spy, he began next to fear, that his companion, Adam Woodcock, whom he had so unceremoniously quitted, would either bring him into some farther dilemma, by venturing into the hotel in quest of him, or ride off and leave him behind altogether. But Lord Seyton did not permit him to escape so easily.—"Tarry," he said, "young man; and let me know thy rank and name. The Seyton has of late been more wont to see friends and followers shrink from his side, than to receive aid from strangers—but a new world may come round, in which he may have the chance of rewarding his well-wishers."

"My name is Roland Græme, my lord," answered the youth, "a page, who, for the present, is in the service of Sir Halbert Glendinning."

"I said so from the first," said one of the young men; "my life I will wager, that this is a shaft out of the heretic's quiver—a stratagem from first to last, to injure into your confidence some espial of his own. They know how to teach both boys and women to play the intelligencers."

"That is false, if it be spoken of me," said Roland; "no man in Scotland should teach me such a foul part!"

"I believe thee, boy," said Lord Seyton, "for thy strokes were too fair to be dealt upon an understanding with those that were to receive them. Credit me, however, I little expected to have help at need from one of your master's household; and I would know what moved thee in my quarrel, to thine own endangering!"

"So please you, my lord," said Roland, "I think

my master himself would not have stood by, and seen an honourable-man borne to earth by odds, if his single arm could help him." Such, at least, is the lesson, we were taught in chivalry, at the Castle of Avenel."

"The good seed hath fallen into good ground, young man," said Seyton; "but, alas! if thou practise such honourable war in these dishonourable days, when right is every where borne down by mastery, thy life, my poor boy, will be but a short one."

"Let it be short, so it be honourable," said Roland Grange; "and permit me now, my lord, to commend me to your grace, and to take my leave. A comrade waits with my horse in the street."

"Take this, however, young man," said Lord Seyton, undoing from his bonnet the golden chain and medal, "and wear it for my sake."

With no little pride Roland Grange accepted the gift, which he hastily fastened around his bonnet, as he had seen gallants wear such an ornament, and, renewing his obeisance to the Baron, left the hall, traversed the court, and appeared in the street, just as Adam Woodcock, vexed and anxious at his delay, had determined to leave the horses to their fate, and go in quest of his youthful comrade. "Whose barn hast thou broken next?" he exclaimed, greatly relieved by his appearance, although his countenance indicated that he had passed through an agitating scene.

"Ask me no questions," said Roland, leaping gaily on his horse; "but see how short time it takes to win a chain of gold," pointing to that which he now wore.

"Now, God forbid that thou hast either stolen it, or reft it by violence," said the falconer; "for, otherwise, I wot not how the devil thou couldst compass it. I have been often here, ay, for months at an end, and no one gave me either chain or medal."

"Thou seest I have got one on shorter acquaintance with the city," answered the page, "but set thine honest heart at rest; that which is fairly won and freely given, is neither reft nor stolen."

"Marry, hang thee, with thy fanfaronade about thy neck!" said the falconer; "I think water will not drown, nor hemp strangle thee. Thou hast been discarded as my lady's page, to come in again as thy lord's squire; and for following a noble young damsel into some great household, thou getest a chain and medal, where another would have had the baton across his shoulders, if he missed having the dirk in his body.—But here we come in front of the old Abbey. Bear thy good luck with you when you cross these paved stones, and, by Our Lady, you may brag Scotland."

As he spoke, they checked their horses, where the huge old vaulted entrance to the Abbey or Palace of Holyrood, crossed the termination of the street down which they had proceeded. The courtyard of the palace opened within this gloomy porch, shewing the front of an irregular pile of monastic buildings, one wing of which is still extant, forming a part of the modern palace, erected in the days of Charles I.

* See Note K. *Seyton, or Seyton.*

† A name given to the gold chains worn by the military men of the period. It is of a Spanish origin; for the fashion of wearing these ornaments was much followed among the conquerors of the New World.

At the gate of the porch the falconer and page resigned their horses to the serving-man in attendance; the falconer commanding him with an air of authority, to carry them safely to the stables.—"We follow," he said, "the Knight of Avenel.—We must bear ourselves for what we are here," said he, in a whisper to Roland, "for every one here is looked on as they demean themselves; and he that is too modest must to the wall, as the proverb says; therefore cock thy bonnet, man, and let us brook the causeway bravely."

Assuming, therefore, an air of consequence, corresponding to what he supposed to be his master's importance and quality, Adam Woodcock led the way into the courtyard of the Palace of Holyrood.

CHAPTER XXVII.

— The sky is clouded, Gaspard,
And the vex'd ocean sleeps a troubled sleep.
Beneath a lurid gleam of parting sunshine,
Such slumber hangs o'er discontented lands,
While factions doubt, as yet, if they have strength
To front the open battle.

Albion—A Poem.

THE youthful page paused on the entrance of the courtyard, and implored his guide to give him a moment's breathing-space. "Let me but look around me, man," said he; "you consider not I have never seen such a scene as this before.—And this is Holyrood—the resort of the gallant and gay, and the fair, and the wise, and the powerful!"

"Ay, marry, is it!" said Woodcock; "but I wish I could hood thee as they do the hawks, for thou starest as wildly as if you sought another fray or another fanfaronade. I would I had thee safely hooded, for thou lookest wild as a goss-hawk."

It was indeed no common sight to Roland, the vestibule of a palace, traversed by its various groups,—some radiant with gaiety—some pensive, and apparently weighed down by affairs concerning the state, or concerning themselves. Here the hoary statesman, with his cautious yet commanding look, his furred cloak and sable pantoufles; there the soldier in buff and steel, his long sword jarring against the pavement, and his whiskered upper lip and frowning brow, looking an habitual defiance of danger, which perhaps was not always made good; there again passed my lord's serving-man, high of heart, and bloody of hand, humble to his master and his master's equals, insolent to all others. To these might be added, the poor suitor, with his anxious look and depressed mien;—the officer, full of his brief authority, elbowing his betters, and possibly his benefactors, out of the road—the proud priest, who sought a better benefice—the proud baron, who sought a grant of church lands—the robber chief, who came to solicit a pardon for the injuries he had inflicted on his neighbours—the plundered franklin, who came to seek vengeance for that which he had himself revenged. Besides these was the mustering and disposition of guards and soldiers—the despatching of messengers, and the receiving them—the tramping and neighing of horses without the gate—the flashing of arms, and rustling of plumes, and jingling of spurs, within it. In short, it was that gay and splendid confusion, in which the eye of youth sees all that is brave and brilliant, and that of experience much that is

doubtful, deceitful, false, and hollow—nopes that will never be gratified—promises which will never be fulfilled—pride in the disguise of humility—and insolence in that of frank and generous bounty.

As, tired of the eager and enraptured attention which the page gave to a scene so new to him, Adam Woodcock endeavoured to get him to move forward, before his exuberance of astonishment should attract the observation of the sharp-witted denizens of the court, the falconer himself became an object of attention to a gay menial in a dark-green bonnet and feather, with a cloak of a corresponding colour, laid down, as the phrase then went, by six broad bars of silver lace, and welshed with violet and silver. The words of recognition burst from both at once. "What! Adam Woodcock at court!" and "What! Michael Wing-the-wind—and how runs the hackt greyhound bitch now?"

"The 'nair for 'ne wear like ourselves, Adam,—eight years this grass—no four legs will carry a dog for ever; but we keep her for the breed, and so she 'scapes Border doom.—But why stand you gazing there? I promise you my lord has wished for you, and asked for you."

"My Lord of Murray asked for me, and he Regent of the kingdom too!" said Adam. "I hunter and thirst to pay my duty to my good lord;—but I fancy his good lordship remembers the day's sport on Carnwath-moor; and my Drummelzier falcon, that beat the hawks from the Isle of Man, and won his lordship a hundred crowns from the Southern baron whom they called Stanley."

"Nay, not to flatter wee, Adam," said his court-friend, "he remembers nought of thee, or of thy falcon either. He hath flown many a higher flight since that, and struck his quarry too. But come, come hither away; I trust we are to be good comrades on the old score."

"What!" said Adam, "you would have me crush a pot with you; but I must first disrobe of my eyes, where he will neither have girl to chase, nor lad to draw sword upon."

"Is the youngster such a one?" said Michael. "Ay, by my hood, he flies at all game," replied Woodcock.

"Then had he better come with us," said Michael Wing-the-wind; "for we cannot have a proper 'arouse just now, only I would wet my lips, and so must you. I want to hear the news from Saint Mary's before you see my lord, and I will let you know how the wind sits up yonder."

While he thus spoke, he led the way to a side door which opened into the court; and threading several dark passages with the air of one who knew the most secret recesses of the palace, conducted them to a small matted chamber, where he placed bread and cheese and a foaming flagon of ale before the falconer and his young companion, who immediately did justice to the latter in a hearty draught, which nearly emptied the measure. Having drawn his breath, and dashed the froth from his whiskers, he observed, that his anxiety for the boy had made him deadly dry.

"Mend your draught," said his hospitable friend, again supplying the flagon from a pitcher which stood beside. "I know the way to the buttery-bar. And now, mind what I say—this morning the Earl of Morton came to my lord in a mighty chafe."

"What! they keep the old friendship, then?" said Woodcock.

"Ay, ay, man, what else?" said Michael; "one hand must scratch the other. But in a mighty chafe was my Lord of Morton, who, to say truth, looketh on such occasions altogether uncanny, and, as it were, fiendish; and he says to my lord,—for I was in the chamber taking orders about a cast of hawks that are to be fetched from Darnoway—they match your long-winged falcons, friend Adam."

"I will believe that when I see them fly as high a pitch," replied Woodcock, this professional observation forming a sort of parenthesis.

"However," said Michael, pursuing his tale, "my Lord of Morton, in a mighty chafe, asked my Lord Regent whether he was well dealt with—for my brother," said he, "should have had a gift to be Commendator of Kennaquhair, and to have all the temporalities erected into a lordship of regality for his benefit; and here," said he, "the false monks have had the insolence to choose a new Abbot to put his claim in my brother's way; and moreover, the rascality of the neighbourhood have burnt and plundered all that was left in the Abbey, so that my brother will not have a house to dwell in, when he hath ousted the lazy hounds of priors." And my lord, seeing him chafed, said mildly to him, "These are shrewd tidings, Douglas, but I trust they be not true; for Halbert Glendinning went southward yesterday, with a band of spears, and assuredly, had either of these chances happened, that the monks had presumed to choose an Abbot, or that the Abbey had been burnt, as you say, he had taken order on the spot for the punishment of such insolence, and had despatched us a messenger." And the Earl of Morton replied—now I pray you, Adam, to notice, that I say this out of love to you and your lord, and also for old comradeship, and also because Sir Halbert hath done me good, and may again—and also because I love not the Earl of Morton, as indeed more fear than like him—so then it were a foul deed in you to betray me.—"But," said the Earl to the Regent, "Take heed, my lord, yet trust not this Glendinning too far—he comes of churl's blood, which was never true to the nobles"—by Saint Andrew, these were his very words.—"And besides," he said, "he hath a brother, a monk in Saint Mary's, and walks all by his guidance, and is making friends on the Border with Buccleuch and with Fernieherst, and will join hand with them, were there likelihood of a new world." And my lord answered, like a free noble lord as he is: "Tuan! my Lord of Morton, I will be warrant for Glendinning's faith; and for his brother, he is a dreamer, that thinks of nought but look and breviary—and if such hap have chanced as you tell of, I look to receive from Glendinning the cowl of a hanged monk, and the head of a riotous churl, by way of sharp and sudden justice."—And my Lord of Morton left the place, and, as it seemed to me, somewhat malecontent. But since that time, my Lord has asked me more than once whether there has arrived no messenger from the Knight of Avenel. And all this I have told you, that you may frame your discourse to the best purpose, for it seems to me that my lord will not be well pleased, if aught has happened like what my Lord of Morton said, and if your lord hath let us on strict orders with it."

¹ Both these Border chieftains were great friends of Queen Mary.

"There was something in this communication which fairly blanked the bold visage of Adam Woodcock, in spite of the reinforcement which his natural hardihood had received from the berry-brown ale of Holyrood.

"What was it he said about a churl's head, that grim Lord of Morton?" said the discontented falconer to his friend.

"Nay, it was my Lord Regent, who said that he expected, if the Abbey was injured, your Knight would send him the head of the ringleader among the rioters."

"Nay, but is this done like a good Protestant," said Adam Woodcock, "or a true Lord of the Congregation? We used to be their white-boys and darlings when we pulled down the convents in Fifo and Perthshire."

"Ay, but that," said Michael, "was when old mother Rome held her own, and her great folks were determined she should have no shelter for her head in Scotland. But, now that the priests are fled in all quarters, and their houses and lands are given to our grandees, they cannot see that we are working the work of reformation, in destroying the palaces of zealous Protestants."

"But I tell you Saint Mary's is not destroyed!" said Woodcock, in increasing agitation; "some trash of painted windows there were broken—things that no nobleman could have brooked in his house—some stone saints were brought on their marrow-bones, like old Widdrington at Chevy-Chase; but as for fire-raising, there was not so much as a lighted lunt amongst us, save the match which the Dragon had to light the burning tow withal, which he was to spit against Saint George; nay, I had caution of that."

"How! Adam Woodcock," said his comrade, "I trust thou hadst no hand in such a fair work? Look you, Adam, I were loth to terrify you, and you just come from a journey; but I promise you, Earl Morton hath brought you down a Maiden from Halifax, you never saw the like of her—and she'll clasp you round the neck, and your head will remain in her arms."

"Pshaw!" answered Adam, "I am too old to have my head turned by any maiden of them all. I know my Lord of Morton will go as far for a buxom lass as any one; but what the devil took him* to Halifax all the way? and if he has got a gamester there, what hath she to do with my head?"

"Much, much!" answered Michael. "Herod's daughter, who did such execution with her foot and ankle, danced not men's heads off more cleanly than this maiden of Morton." "Tis an axe, man,—an axe which falls of itself like a sash window, and never gives the headman the trouble to wield it."

"By my faith, a sashfwd device," said Woodcock; "heaven keep us free on't!"

The page, seeing no end to the conversation betwixt these two old comrades, and anxious from what he had heard, concerning the fate of the Abbot, now interrupted their conference.

"Methinks," he said, "Adam Woodcock, thou hast better deliver thy master's letter to the Regent; questionless he hath therein stated what

has chanced at Kennauquhar in the way most advantageous for all concerned."

"The boy is right," said Michael Wing-the-wind, "my lord will be very impatient."

"The child hath wit enough to keep himself warm," said Adam Woodcock, producing from his hawking-bag his lord's letter, addressed to the Earl of Murray, "and for that matter so have I. So, Master Roland, you will e'en please, to present this yourself to the Lord Regent; his presence will be better graced by a young page than by an old falconer."

"Well said, canny Yorkshire!" replied his friend; "and but now you were so earnest to see our good Lord!—Why, wouldst thou put the lad into the noose that thou mayst slip tethy thyself?—or dost thou think the Maiden will clasp his fair young neck more willingly than thy old sunburnt waist?"

"Go to," answered the falconer; "thy wit towers high as it could strike the quarry. I tell thee, the youth has bought to fear—he had nothing to do with the gambol—a rare gambol it was, Michael, as mad-caps ever played; and I had made as rare a ballad, if we had had the luck to get it sung to an end. But mym for that—*taoe*, as I said before, is Latin for a candle. Carry the youth to the presence, and I will remain here, with bridle in hand, ready to strike the spurs up to the rowel-heads, in case the hawk flies my way.—I will soon put Soltra-edge, I trow, betwixt the Regent and me, if he means me less than fair play."

"Come on then, my lad," said Michael, "since thou must needs take the spring before canny Yorkshire." Saying, he led the way through winding passages, closely followed by Roland Graeme, until they arrived at a large winding stone stair, the steps of which were so long and broad, and at the same time so low, as to render the ascent uncommonly easy. When they had ascended about the height of one story, the guide stepped aside, and pushed open the door of a dark and gloomy antechamber; so dark, indeed, that his youthful companion stumbled, and nearly fell down upon a low step, which was awkwardly placed on the very threshold.

"Take heed," said Michael Wing-the-wind, in a very low tone of voice, and first glancing cautiously round to see if any one listened—"Take heed, my young friend, for those who fall on these boards seldom rise again—Seest thou that," he added, in a still lower voice, pointing to some dark crimson stains on the floor, on which a ray of light, shot through a small aperture, and traversing the general gloom of the apartment, fell with mottled radiance—"Seest thou that, youth?—walk warily, for men have fallen here before you."

"What mean you?" said this page, his flesh creeping, though he scarce knew why; "Is it blood?"

"Ay, ay," said the domestic, in the same whispering tone, and dragging the youth on by the arm—"Blood it is,—but this is no time to question, or even to look at it. Blood it is, foully and fearfully shed, as foully and fearfully avenged. The blood," he added, in a still more cautious tone, "of Seignor David."

Roland Graeme's heart throbbed when he found himself so unexpectedly in the scene of Rizzio's slaughter, a catastrophe which had chilled with

* *Maiden of Morton*—a species of guillotine which the Regent Morton brought down from Halifax, certainly at a period considerably later than intimated in the tale. He was himself the first who suffered by the engine.

horror all even in that rude age, which had been the theme of wonder and pity through every cottage and castle in Scotland, and had not escaped that of Avenel. But his guide hurried him forward, permitting no further question, and with the manner of one who has already tampered too much with a dangerous subject. A tap which he made at a low door at one end of the vestibule, was answered by a huissier or usher, who, opening it cautiously, received Michael's intimation that a page waited the Regent's leisure, who brought letters from the Knight of Avenel.

"The Council is breaking up," said the usher; "but give me the packet; his grace the Regent will presently see the messenger."

"The packet," replied the page, "must be delivered into the Regent's own hands; such were the orders of my master."

The usher looked at him from head to foot, as if surprised at his boldness, and then replied, with some asperity, "Say you so, my young master? Thou crowest loudly to be but a chicken, and from a country barn-yard too."

"Were it a time or place," said Roland, "thou shouldst see I can do more than crow; but do your duty, and let the Regent know I wait his pleasure."

"Thou art but a pert knave to tell me of my duty," said the courtier in office; "but I will find a time to shew you you are out of yours; meanwhile, wait there till you are wanted." So saying, he shut the door in Roland's face.

Michael Wing-the-wind, who had shrunk from his youthful companion during this altercation, according to the established maxim of courtiers of all ranks, and in all ages, now transgressed their prudential line of conduct so far as to come up to him once more. "Thou art a hopeful young sprig-gold," said he, "and I see right well old Yorkshire had reason in his caution. Thou hast been five minutes in the court, and hast employed thy time so well, as to make a powerful and a mortal enemy out of the usher of the council-chamber. Why, man, you might almost as well have offended the deputy butler!"

"I care not what he is," said Roland Grieme; "I will teach whomever I speak with, to speak civilly to me in return. I did not come from Avenel to be browbeaten in Holyrood."

"Bravo, my lad!" said Michael; "it is a fine spirit if you can but hold it—but see, the door opens."

The usher appeared, and, in a more civil tone of voice and manner, said, that his Grace the Regent would receive the Knight of Avenel's message; and accordingly marshalled Roland Grieme the way into the apartment, from which the Council had been just dismissed, after finishing their consultations. There was in the room a long oaken table, surrounded by stools of the same wood, with a large elbow chair, covered with crimson velvet, at the head. Writing materials and papers were lying there in apparent disorder; and one or two of the party counsellors who had lingered behind, assuming their cloaks, bonnets, and swords, and bidding farewell to the Regent, were departing slowly by a large door, on the opposite side to that through which the page entered. Apparently the Earl of Murray had made some jest, for the smiling countenances of the statesmen expressed that sort of

cordial reception which is paid by courtiers to the condescending pleasantries of a prince.

The Regent himself was laughing heartily as he said, "Farewell, my lords, and hold me remembered to the Cook of the North."

He then turned slowly round towards Roland Grieme, and the marks of gaiety, real or assumed, disappeared from his countenance, as completely as the passing bubbles leave the dark mirror of a still profound lake into which a traveller has cast a stone; in the course of a minute his noble features had assumed their natural expression of deep and even melancholy gravity.

This distinguished statesman, for as such his worst enemies acknowledged him, possessed all the external dignity, as well as almost all the noble qualities, which could grace the power that he enjoyed; and had he succeeded to the throne as his legitimate inheritance, it is probable he would have been recorded as one of Scotland's wisest and greatest kings. But that he held his authority by the deposition and imprisonment of his sister and benefactress, was a crime which those only can excuse who think ambition an apology for ingratitude. He was dressed plainly in black velvet, after the Flemish fashion, and wore in his high-crowned hat a jewelled clasp, which looped it up on one side, and formed the only ornament of his apparel. He had his poniard by his side, and his sword lay on the council table.

Such was the personage before whom Roland Grieme now presented himself, with a feeling of breathless awe, very different from the usual boldness and vivacity of his temper. In fact, he was, from education and nature, forward, but not impudent, and was much more easily controlled by the moral superiority, arising from the elevated talents and renown of those with whom he conversed, than by pretensions founded only on rank or external show. He might have braved with indifference the presence of an Earl, merely distinguished by his belt and coronet; but he felt overawed in that of the eminent soldier and statesman, the wielder of a nation's power, and the leader of her armies.—The greatest and wisest are flattered by the deference of youth—so graceful and becoming in itself; and Murray took, with much courtesy, the letter from the hands of the abashed and blushing page, and answered with complaisance to the imperfect and half-muttered greeting which he endeavoured to deliver to him on the part of Sir Halbert of Avenel. He even paused a moment ere he broke the sill: with which the letter was secured, to ask the page his name;—so much he was struck with his very handsome features and form.

"Roland Graham," he said, repeating the words after the hesitating page. "What! of the Gabriels of the Lennox?"

"No, my lord," replied Roland; "my parents dwelt in the Debateable Land."

Murray made no farther inquiry, but proceeded to read his despatches; during the perusal of which, his brow began to assume a stern expression of displeasure, as that of one who found something which at once surprised and disturbed him. He sat down on the nearest seat, frowned till his eyebrows almost met together, read the letter twice over, and was then silent for several minutes. At length, raising his head, his eye encountered that of the usher, who in vain endeavoured to exchange the look of eager

and curious observation with which he had been perusing the Regent's features, for that open and unnoticing expression of countenance, which, in looking at all, seems as if it saw and marked nothing—a cast of look which may be practised with advantage by all those, of whatever degree, who are admitted to witness the familiar and unguarded hours of their superiors. Great men are as jealous of their thoughts as the wife of King Candaules was of her charms, and will as readily punish those who have, however involuntarily, beheld them in mental déshabillé and exposure.

"Leave the apartment, Hyndman," said the Regent, sternly, "and carry your observation elsewhere. You are too knowing, sir, for your post, which, by special order, is destined for men of blunter capacity. So! now you look more like a fool than you did"—(for Hyndman, as may easily be supposed, was not a little disconcerted by this rebuke)—"keep that confused stare, and it may keep your office. Begone, sir!"

The usher departed in dismay, not forgetting to register, amongst his other causes of dislike to Roland Græme, that he had been the witness of this disgraceful cliding. When he had left the apartment, the Regent again addressed the page.

"Your name, you say, is Armstrong?"

"No," replied Roland, "my name is Græme, so please you—Roland Græme, whose forbears were designated of Heathergill, in the Debateable Land."

"Ay, I know it was a name from the Debateable Land. Hast thou any acquaintance in Edinburgh?"

"My lord," replied Roland, willing rather to evade this question than to answer it directly, for the prudence of being silent with respect to Lord Seyton's adventure immediately struck him, "I have been in Edinburgh scarce an hour, and that for the first time in my life."

"What! and thou Sir Halbert Glendinning's page?" said the Regent.

"I was brought up as my Lady's page," said the youth, "and left Avenel Castle for the first time in my life—at least since my childhood—only three days since."

"My Lady's page!" repeated the Earl of Murray, as if speaking to himself; "it was strange to send his Lady's page on a matter of such deep concernment—Morton will say it is of a piece with the nomination of his brother to be Abbot; and yet in some sort, an inexperienced youth will best serve the task.—What hast thou been taught, young man, in thy doughty apprenticeship?"

"To hunt, my lord, and to hawk," said Roland Græme.

"To hunt coney, and to hawk at ouzels!" said the Regent, smiling; "for such are the sports of ladies and their followers."

Græme's cheek reddened deeply as he replied, not without some emphasis, "To hunt red-deer of the first head, and to strike down herons of the highest soar, my lord, which, in Lothian speech, may be termed, for aught I know, coney and ouzels;—also, I can wield a brand and couch a lance, according to our Border meaning; in inland speech these may be termed water-flags and bulrushes."

"Thy speech rings like metal," said the Regent, "and I pardon the sharpness of it for the truth.—Thou knowest, then, what belongs to the duty of a man-at-arms?"

"So far as exercise can teach it without real service in the field," answered Roland Græme; "but our Knight permitted none of his household to make raids, and I never had the good fortune to see a stricken field."

"The good fortune!" repeated the Regent, smiling somewhat sorrowfully, "take my word, young man, war is the only game from which both parties rise losers."

"Not always, my lord!" answered the page, with his characteristic audacity, "if fame speaks truth."

"How, sir?" said the Regent, colouring in his turn, and perhaps suspecting an indiscreet allusion to the height which he himself had attained by the lap of civil war.

"Because, my lord," said Roland Græme, without change of tone, "he who fights well, must have fame in life, or honour in death; and so war is a game from which no one can rise a loser."

The Regent smiled and shook his head, when at that moment the door opened, and the Earl of Morton presented himself.

"I come somewhat hastily," he said, "and I enter unannounced because my news are of weight—It is as I said; Edward Glendinning is named Abbot, and —"

"Hush, my lord!" said the Regent, "I know it, but —"

"And perhaps you knew it before I did, my Lord of Murray," answered Morton, his dark red brow growing darker and redder as he spoke.

"Morton," said Murray, "suspect me not—touch not mine honour—I have to suffer enough from the calumnies of foes, let me not have to contend with the unjust suspicions of my friends.—We are not alone," said he, recollecting himself, "or I could tell you more."

He led Morton into one of the deep embrasures which the windows formed in the massive wall, and which afforded a retiring place for their conversing apart. In this recess, Roland observed them speak together with much earnestness, Murray appearing to be grave and earnest, and Morton having a jealous and offended air, which seemed gradually to give way to the assurances of the Regent.

As their conversation grew more earnest, they became gradually louder in speech, having perhaps forgotten the presence of the page, the more readily as his position in the apartment placed him out of sight, so that he found himself unwillingly privy to more of their discourse than he cared to hear. For, page though he was, a mean curiosity after the secrets of others had never been numbered amongst Roland's failings; and moreover, with all his natural rashness, he could not but doubt the safety of becoming privy to the secret discourse of these powerful and dreaded men. Still he could neither stop his ears, nor with propriety leave the apartment; and while he thought of some means of signifying his presence, he had already heard so much, that, to have produced himself suddenly would have been as awkward, and perhaps as dangerous, as in quiet to abide the end of their conference. What he overheard, however, was but an imperfect part of their communication; and although an expert politician, acquainted with the circumstances of the times, would have had little difficulty in tracing the meaning, yet Roland Græme could only form very general and vague conjectures as to the import of their discourse.

"All is prepared," said Murray, "and Lindsay is setting forward—She must hesitate no longer—thou seest I act by thy counsel, and harden myself against softer considerations."

"True, my lord," replied Morton, "if what is necessary to gain power, you do not hesitate, but go boldly to the mark. But are you as careful to defend and preserve what you have won?—Why this establishment of domestic around her?—has not your sister men and maidens enough to tend her, but you must consent to this superfluous and dangerous retinue?"

"For shame, Morton!—a Princess, and my sister, could I do less than allow her due tendance?"

"Ay," replied Morton, "even thus fly all your shafts—smartly enough loosened from the bow, and not unskilfully aimed—but a breath of foolish affection ever crosses in the mid volley, and sways the arrow from the mark."

"Say not so, Morton!" replied Murray, "I have both dared and done—"

"Yes, enough to gain, but not enough to keep—reckon not that she will think and act thus—you have wounded her deeply, both in pride and in power—it signifies nought, that you would tent now the wound with unavailing salves—at matters stand with you, you must forfeit the title of an affectionate brother, to hold that of a bold and determined statesman."

"Morton!" said Murray, with some impatience, "I brook not these taunts—what I have done I have done—what I must farther do, I must and will—but I am not made of iron like thee, and I cannot but remember—Enough of this—my purpose holds."

"And I warrant me," said Morton, "the choice of these domestic consolations will rest with—"

Here he whispered names which escaped Roland Græme's ear. Murray replied in a similar tone, but so much raised towards the conclusion of the sentence, that the page heard these words—"And of him I hold myself secure, by Glendinning's recommendation."

"Ay, which may be as much trustworthy as his late conduct at the Abbey of Saint Mary's—you have heard that his brother's election has taken place. Your favourite Sir Halbert, my Lord of Murray, has as much fraternal affection as yourself."

"By heaven, Morton, that taunt demanded an unfriendly answer, but I pardon it, for your brother also is concerned; but this election shall be annulled. I tell you, Earl of Morton, while I hold the sword of state in my royal nephew's name, neither Lord nor Knight in Scotland shall dispute my authority; and if I bear, with insults from my friends, it is only while I know them to be such, and forgive their follies for their faithfulness."

Morton muttered what seemed to be some excuse, and the Regent answered him in a milder tone, and then subjoined, "Besides, I have another pledge than Glendinning's recommendation, for this youth's fidelity—his nearest relative has placed herself in my hands as his security, to be dealt withal as his doings shall deserve."

"That is something," replied Morton; "but yet in fair love and good-will, I must still pray you to keep on your guard. The foes are stirring again, as hornets and hornets become busy so soon as

the storm-blast is over. George of Seyton was crossing the causeway this morning with a score of men at his back, and had a ruffle with my friends of the house of Leslie—they met at the Tron, and were fighting hard, when the provost, with his guard of partisans, came in thirdsman, and staved them asunder with their halberds, as men part dog and bear."

"He hath my order for such interference," said the Regent—"Has any one been hurt?"

"George of Seyton himself, by black Ralph Leslie—the devil take the rapier that ran not through from side to side!—Ralph has a bloody coxcómb, by a blow from a messen-page whom nobody knew—Dick Seyton of Windygowl is run through the arm, and two gallants of the Leslies have suffered phlebotomy. This is all the gentle blood which has been spilled in the revel; but a yeoman or two on both sides have had bones broken and ears chopped. The ostler-wives, who are like to be the only losers by their miscarriage, have dragged the knaves off the street, and are crying a drunken coronach over them."

"You take it lightly, Douglas," said the Regent; "these broils and feuds would shame the capital of the great Turk, let alone that of a Christian and reformed state. But, if I live, this gear shall be amended; and men shall say, when they read my story, that if it were my cruel hap to rise to power by the dethronement of a sister, I employed it, when gained, for the benefit of the commonweal."

"And of your friends," replied Morton; "wherefore I trust for your instant order annulling the election of this lurdane Abbot, Edward Glendinning."

"You shall be presently satisfied," said the Regent; and, stepping forward, he began to call, "So ho, Hyndman!" when suddenly his eye lighted on Roland Græme—"By my faith, Douglas," said he, turning to his friend, "here have been three at counsel!"

"Ay, but only two can keep counsel," said Morton; "the galliard must be disposed of."

"For shame, Morton—an orphan boy!—Hearken thee, my child—Thou hast told me some of thy accomplishments—canst thou speak truth?"

"Ay, my lord, when it serves my turn," replied Græme.

"It shall serve thy turn now," said the Regent; "and falsehood shall be thy destruction. How much hast thou heard or understood of what we two have spoken together?"

"But little, my lord," replied Roland Græme boldly, "which met my apprehension, saving that it seemed to me as if in something you doubted the faith of the Knight of Avenel, under whose roof I was nurtured."

"And what hast thou to say on that point, young man?" continued the Regent, bending his eyes upon him with a keen and strong expression of observation.

"That," said the page, "depends on the quality of those who speak against his honour whose bread I have long eaten. If they be my inferiors, I say they lie, and will maintain what I say with my baton; if my equals, still I say they lie, and will do battle in the quarrel, if they list, with my sword; if my superiors—he paused.

"Proceed boldly," said the Regent—"What if

they superiors said aught that nearly touched your master's honour?"

"I would say," replied Graeme, "that he did ill to slander the absent, and that my master was a man who could render an account of his actions to any one who should manfully demand it of him to his face."

"And it were manfully said," replied the Regent — "what thinkest thou, my Lord of Morton?"

"I think," replied Morton, "that if the young galliard resemble a certain ancient friend of ours, as much in the craft of his disposition as he does in eye and in brow, there may be a wide difference betwixt what he means and what he speaks."

"And whom meanest thou that he resembles so closely?" said Murray.

"Even the true and trusty Julian Avenel," replied Morton.

"But this youth belongs to the Debateable Land," said Murray.

"It may be so; but Julian was an outlying striker of venison, and made many a far cast when he had a fair doe in chase."

"Pshaw!" said the Regent, "this is but idle talk — Here, thou Hyndman — thou curiosity," calling to the usher, who now entered, — "conduct this youth to his companion. — You will both," he said to Graeme, "keep yourselves in readiness to travel on short notice." — And then motioning to him courteously to withdraw, he broke up the interview.

CHAPTER XIX.

It is and is not — 'tis the thing I sought for,
Have kneel'd for, pray'd for, risk'd my fame and life for,
And yet it is not — no more than the shadow
Upon the hard, cold, flat, and polished mirror,
Is the warm, graceful, round-d, living substance
Which it presents in form and lineament.

Old Play.

THE usher, with gravity which ill concealed a jealous scowl, conducted Roland Graeme to a lower apartment, where he found his comrade the falconer. The man of office then briefly acquainted them that this would be their residence till his Grace's farther orders; that they were to go to the pantry, to the buttery, to the cellar, and to the kitchen, at the usual hours, to receive the allowances becoming their station, — instructions which Adam Woodcock's old familiarity with the court made him perfectly understand — "For your beds," he said, "you must go to the hostlerie of Saint Michael's, in respect the palace is now full of the domestics of the greater nobles."

No sooner was the usher's back turned than Adam exclaimed, with all the glee of eager curiosity, "And now, Master Roland, the news — the news — come, unbutton thy pouch, and give us thy tidings — What says the Regent? asks he for Adam Woodcock? — and is all soldered up, or must the Abbot of Unreason strap for it?"

"All is well in that quarter," said the page; "and for the rest — But, hey-day, what I have you taken the chain and medal off from my bonnet?"

"And meet tighest was, when you usher, vinegar-faced rogue that he is, began to inquire what Popish trammal you were wearing — By the mass, the metal would have been consecrated for conscience-sake, like your other rattle-trap yonder at

Avenel, which Mistress Lillias bears about on her shoes in the guise of a pair of shoe-buckles — This comes of carrying Popish nicknackets about you."

"The jade!" exclaimed Roland Graeme, "has she melted down my rosary into buckles for her clumsy heels, which will set off such a garnish nearly as well as a cow's might? — But, hang her, let her keep them — many a dog's trick have I played old Lillias, for want of having something better to do, and the buckles will serve for a remembrance. Do you remember the verjuice I put into the comfits, when old Wifgate and she were to breakfast together on Easter morning?"

"In troth do I, Master Roland — the major-domo's mouth was as crooked as a hawk's beak for the whole morning afterwards, and any other page in your room would have tasted the discipline of the porter's lodge for it. But my Lady's favour stood between yourskin and many a jerking — Lord send you may be the better for her protection in such matters!"

"I am at least grateful for it, Adam; and I am glad you put me in mind of it."

"Well, but the news, my young master," said Woodcock, "spell me the tidings — what are we to do at next? — what did the Regent say to you?"

"Nothing that I am to repeat again," said Roland Graeme, shaking his head.

"Why, hey-day," said Adam, "how prudent we are become all of a sudden! You have advanced warily in brief space, Master Roland. You have well-nigh had your head broken, and you have gained your gold chain, and you have made an enemy, Master Usher to wit, with his two legs like hawks' perches, and you have had audience of the first man in the realm, and bear as much mystery in your brow, as if you had flown in the court-sky ever since you were hatched. I believe, in my soul, you would run with a piece of the egg-shell on your head like the curlews, which (I would we were after them again) we used to call whaupps in the Halidome and its neighbourhood. But sit thee down, boy; Adam Woodcock was never the lad to seek to enter into forbidden secrets — sit thee down, and I will go and fetch the vivers — I know the butler and the pantler of old."

The good-natured falconer set forth upon his errand, busying himself about procuring their refreshment; and, during his absence, Roland Graeme abandoned himself to the strange, complicated, and yet heart-stirring reflections, to which the events of the morning had given rise. Yesterday he was of neither mark nor likelihood, a vagrant boy, the attendant on a relative, of whose sane judgment he himself had not the highest opinion; but now he had become, he knew not why, or wherefore, or to what extent, the custodian, as the Scottish phrase went, of some important state secret, in the safe keeping of which the Regent himself was concerned. It did not diminish from, but rather added to the interest of a situation so unexpected, that Roland himself did not perfectly understand wherein he stood committed by the state secrets, in which he had unwittingly become participator. On the contrary, he felt like one who looks on a romantic landscape, of which he sees the features for the first time, and then obscured with mist and driving tempest. The imperfect glimpse which the eye catches of rocks, trees, and other objects around him, adds double dignity to these shrouded mountains and

darkened abysses, of which the height, depth, and extent, are left to imagination.

But mortals, especially at the well-appetized age which precedes twenty years, are seldom so much engaged either by real or conjectural subjects of speculation, but that their earthly wants claim their hour of attention. And with many a smile did our hero, so the reader may term him if he will, hail the re-appearance of his friend Adam Woodcock, bearing on one platter a tremendous portion of boiled beef, and on another a plentiful allowance of greens, or rather what the Scotch call lung-kale. A groom followed with bread, salt, and the other means of setting forth a meal; and when they had both placed on the oaken table what they bore in their hands, the falconer observed, that since he knew the court, it had got harder and harder every day to the poor gentlemen and yeomen retainers, but that now it was an absolute flaying of a flea for the hide and tallow. Such thronging to the wicket, and such churlish answers, and such bare beef-bones, such a shouldering at the buttery-latch and collarage, and nought to be gained beyond small insufficient single ale, or at best with a single straike of malt to counterbalance a double allowance of water—"By the mass, though, my young friend," said he, while he saw the food disappearing fast under Roland's active exertions, "it is not so well to lament for former times as to take the advantage of the present, else we are like to lose on both sides."

So saying, Adam Woodcock drew his chair towards the table, unsheathed his knife, (for every one carried that minister of festive distribution for himself,) and imitated his young companion's example, who for the moment had lost his anxiety for the future in the eager satisfaction of an appetite sharpened by youth and abstinence.

In truth, they made, though the materials were sufficiently simple, a very respectable meal, at the expense of the royal allowance; and Adam Woodcock, notwithstanding the deliberate censure which he had passed on the household beer of the palace, had taken the fourth deep draught of the black jack ere he remembered him that he had spoken in its dispraise. Flinging himself jollily and luxuriously back in an old damask elbow-chair, and looking with careless glee towards the page, extending at the same time his right leg, and stretching the other easily over it, he reminded his companion that he had not yet heard the ballad which he had made for the Abbot of Unreason's revel. And accordingly he struck merrily up with

"The Pope, that peasant full of pride,
Has blinded us full lang."

Roland Graeme, who felt no great delight, as may be supposed, in the falconer's satire, considering its subject, began to snatch up his mantle, and fling it around his shoulders, an action which instantly interrupted the ditty of Adam Woodcock.

"Where the vengeance are you going now," he said, "thou restless boy!—Thou hast quicksilver in the veins of thee to a certainty, and canst no more abide any dounce and sensible communing, than a hoodless hawk would keep perched on my wrist!"

"Why, Adam," replied the page, "if you must needs know, I am about to take a walk and look at this fair city. One may as well be still mewed up

in the old castle of the lake, if one is to sit the five-long night between four walls, and hearken to old ballads."

"It is a new ballad—the Lord help thee!" replied Adam, "and that one of the best that ever was matched with a rousing chorus."

"Be it so," said the page, "I will hear it another day, when the rain is dashing against the windows, and there is neither steed stamping, nor spur jingling, nor feather waving in the neighbourhood to mar my marking it well. But, even now, I want to be in the world, and to look about me."

"But the never a stride shall you go without me," said the falconer, "until the Regent shall take you whole and sound off my hand; and so, if you will, we may go to the hostelry of Saint Michael's, and there you will see company enough, but through the casement, mark you me; for as to rambling through the street to seek Seytons and Leslies, and having a dozen holes drilled in your new jacket with rapier and poniard, I will yield no way to it."

"To the hostelry of Saint Michael's, then, with all my heart," said the page; and they left the palace accordingly, rendered to the sentinels at the gate, who had now taken their posts for the evening, a strict account of their names and business, were dismissed through a small wicket of the close-barred portal, and soon reached the inn or hostelry of Saint Michael, which stood in a large court-yard, off the main street, close under the descent of the Calton-hill. The place, wide, waste, and uncomfortable, resembled rather an Eastern caravansary, where men found shelter indeed, but were obliged to supply themselves with every thing else, than one of our modern inns;

Where not one comfort shall to those be lost,
Who never ask, or never feel, the cost.

But still, to the inexperienced eye of Roland Graeme, the bustle and confusion of this place of public resort, furnished excitement and amusement. In the large room, into which they had rather found their own way than been ushered by mine host, travellers and natives of the city entered and departed, met and greeted, gamed or drank together, forming the strongest contrast to the stern and monotonous order and silence with which matters were conducted in the well-ordered household of the Knight of Avenel. Alteration of every kind, from brawling to jesting, was going on amongst the groups around them, and yet the noise and mingled voices seemed to disturb no one and indeed to be noticed by no others than by those who composed the group to which the speaker belonged.

The falconer passed through the apartment to a projecting latticed window, which formed a sort of recess from the room itself; and having here ensconced himself and his companion, he called for some refreshments; and a taster, after he had shouted for the twentieth time, accommodated him with the remains of a cold capon and a neat's tongue, together with a pewter stoup of weak French vin-de-paya. "Fet! a stoup of brandy-wine, thou knave—We will be jolly to-night, Master Roland," said he, when he saw himself thus accommodated, "and let care come to-morrow."

But Roland had eaten too lately to enjoy the good cheer; and feeling his curiosity much sharper than his appetite, he made it his choice to look out

of the lattice, when overturning a large yard, surrounded by the stables of the hostelry, and fed his eyes on the busy sight beneath while Adam Woodcock, after he had compared his companion to the "Laird of Macfarlane's geese, who liked their play better than their meat," disposed of his time with the aid of cup and trencher, occasionally humming the burden of his birth-strangled ballad, and beating time to it with his fingers on the little round table. In this exercise he was frequently interrupted by the exclamations of his companion, as he saw something new in the yard beneath, to attract and interest him.

It was a busy scene, for the number of gentlemen and nobles who were now crowded into the city, had filled all spare stables and places of public reception with their horses and military attendants. There were some score of yeomen, dressing their own or their masters' horses in the yard, whistling, singing, laughing, and upbraiding each other, in a style of wit which the good order of Avenel Castle rendered strange to Roland Græme's ears. Others were busy repairing their own arms, or cleaning those of their masters. One fellow, having just bought a bundle of twenty spears, was sitting in a corner, employed in painting the white staves of the weapons with yellow and vermilion. Other lacqueys led large stag-hounds, or wolf-dogs, of noble race, carefully muzzled to prevent accidents to passengers. All came and went, mixed together and separated, under the delighted eye of the page, whose imagination had not even conceived a scene so gaily diversified with the objects he had most pleasure in beholding; so that he was perpetually breaking the quiet reverie of honest Woodcock, and the mental progress which he was making in his ditty, by exclaiming, "Look here, Adam—look at the bonny bay horse—Saint Anthony, what a gallant foreland he hath got!—and see the goodly gray, which yonder fellow in the trizejacket is dressing as awkwardly as if he had never touched aught but a cow—¹ I would I were nigh him to teach him his trade!—And lo you, Adam, the gay Milan armour that the yeoman is scouring, all steel and silver, like our Knight's prime suit, of which old Wiggate makes such account—² And see to yonder pretty wench, Adam, who comes tripping through them all with her milkpail—³ I warrant me she has had a long walk from the loaning; she has a stammel waistcoat, like your favourite Cicely Sunderland, Master Adam!"

"By my hood, lad," answered the falconer, "it is well for thee thou wert brought up where grace grew.. Even in the Castle of Avenel thou wert a wild-blood enough, but hadst thou been nurtured nere, within a flight-shot of the Court, thou hadst been the veriest crack-hemp of a page that ever wore feather in thy bonnet or steel by thy side: truly, I wish it may end well with thee."

"Nay, but leave thy senseless humming and drumming, old Adam, and come to the window ere thou hast quenched thy senses in the pint-pot there. See here comes a merry minstrel with his crowd, and a wench with him, that dances with bells at her ankles; and see, the yeomen and pages leave their horses and the armour they were cleaning, and gather round, as is very natural, to hear the music. Come, old Adam, we will thither too."

"You shall call me out if I do go down," said Adam; "you are near as good minstrelsy as the

strollor can make, if you had but the grace to listen to it."

"But the wench in the stammel waistcoat is stopping too, Adam—by heaven, they are going to dance! a Frieze-jacket wants to dance with stammel-waistcoat, but she is coy and recusant."

Then suddenly changing his tone of levity into one of deep interest and surprise, he exclaimed, "Queen of Heaven! what is it that I see!" and then remained silent.

The sage Adam Woodcock, who was in a sort of languid dejection amused with the page's exclamations, even while he professed to despise them, became at length rather desirous to see his tongue once more a-going, that he might enjoy the superiority afforded by his own intimate familiarity with all the circumstances which excited in his young companion's mind so much wonderment.

"Well, then," he said at last, "what is it you do see, Master Roland, that you have become mute all of a sudden?"

Roland returned no answer.

"I say, Master Roland Græme," said the falconer, "it is manners in my country for a man to speak when he is spoken to."

Roland Græme remained silent.

"The murrain is in the boy," said Adam Woodcock, "he has stared out his eyes and talked his tongue to pieces, I think."

The falconer hastily drank off his can of wine, and came to Roland, who stood like a statue, with his eyes eagerly bent on the court-yard, though Adam Woodcock was unable to detect amongst the joyous scene which it exhibited aught that could deserve such devoted attention.

"The lad is mazed!" said the falconer to himself.

But Roland Græme had good reasons for his surprise, though they were not such as he could communicate to his companion.

The touch of the old minstrel's instrument, for he had already begun to play, had drawn in several auditors from the street when one entered the gate of the yard, whose appearance exclusively arrested the attention of Roland Græme. He was of his own age or a good deal younger, and from his dress and bearing might be of the same rank and calling, having all the air of coxcombry and pretension, which accorded with a handsome, though slight and low figure, and an elegant dress, in part hid by a large purple cloak. As he entered, he cast a glance up towards the windows, and, to his extreme astonishment, under the purple velvet bonnet and white feather, Roland recognized the features so deeply impressed on his memory, the bright and clustered tresses, the laughing full blue eyes, the well-formed eyebrows, the nose, with the slightest possible inclination to be aquiline, the ruby lip, of which an arch and half-suppressed smile seemed the habitual expression—in short, the form and face of Catherine Seyton; in man's attire, however, and mimicking, as it seemed, not unsuccessfully, the bearing of a youthful but forward page.

"Saint George and Saint Andrew!" exclaimed the amazed Roland Græme to himself, "was there ever such an audacious queen!—she seems a little ashamed of her mummery too, for she holds the lap of her cloak to her face, and her colour is heightened—but Santa Maria, how she threatens the throng, with as firm and bold a step as if she

had never tied petticoat round her waist!—Holy saints! she holds up her riding-rod as if she would lay it about some of their ears, that stand most in her way—by the hand of my father! she bears herself like the very model of paghehood.—Hey! what! sure she will not strike frieze-jacket in earnest!" But he was not long left in doubt; for the lout whom he had before repeatedly noticed; standing in the way of the bustling page, and maintaining his place with clownish obstinacy or stupidity; the advanced riding-rod was, without a moment's hesitation, sharply applied to his shoulders, in a manner which made him spring aside, rubbing the part of the body which had received no unceremonious a hint that it was in the way of his betters. The party injured growled forth an oath or two of indignation, and Roland Græme began to think of flying down stairs to the assistance of the trasfclator, Catharine; but the laugh of the yard-was against frieze-jacket, which indeed had, in those days, small chance of fair play in a quarrel with velvet and embroidery; so that the fellow, who was a monial in the inn, slunk back to finish his task of dressing the bonny gray, laughed at by all, but most by the wench in the stammel-waistcoat, his fellow-servant, who, to crown his disgrace, had the cruelty to cast an applauding smile upon the author of the injury, while, with a freedom more like the milkmaid of the town than she of the plains, she accosted him with—"Is there any one you want here, my pretty gentleman, that you seem in such haste!"

"I seek a sprig of a lad," said the seeming gallant, "with a sprig of holly in his cap, black hair, and black eyes, green jacket, and the air of a country coxcomb—I have sought him through every close and alley in the Canongate, the fiend gore him!"

"Why, God-a-mercy, Nun!" muttered Roland Græme, much bewildered.

"I will inquire him presently out for your fair young worship," said the wench of the inn.

"Do," said the gallant squire, "and if you bring me to him, you shall have a groat to-night, and a kiss on Sunday when you have on a cleaner kirtle."

"Why, God-a-mercy, Nun!" again muttered Roland, "this is a note above E La."

In a moment after, the servant entered the room, and ushered in the object of his surprise.

While the disguised vestal looked with unabashed brow, and bold and rapid glance of her eye, through the various parties in the large old room, Roland Græme, who felt an internal, awkward sense of bashful confusion, which he deemed altogether unworthy of the bold and dashing character to which he aspired, determined not to be browbeaten and put down by this singular female, but to meet her with a glance of recognition so shy, so penetrating, so expressively humorous, as should shew her at once he was in possession of her secret and master of her fate, and should compel her to humble herself towards him, at least into the look and manner of respectful and deprecating observance.

This was extremely well planned; but just as Roland had called up the knowing glance, the suppressed smile, the shrewd intelligent look, which was to ensure his triumph, he encountered the bold, firm, and steady gaze of his brother or sister-page, who, casting on him a falcon glance, and recognising him at once as the object of his search, walked

up with the most unconcerned look, the most free and undaunted composure, and hailed him with "You, Sir Holly-top, I would speak with you."

The steady coolness and assurance with which these words were uttered, although the voice was the very voice he had heard at the old convent, and although the features more nearly resembled those of Catharine when seen close than when viewed from a distance, produced, nevertheless, such a confusion in Roland's mind, that he became uncertain whether he was not still under a mistake from the beginning; the knowing shrewdness which should have animated his visage faded into a sheepish bashfulness, and the half-suppressed but most intelligible smile, became the senseless giggle of one who laughs to cover his own disorder of ideas.

"Do they understand a Scotch tongue in thy country, Holly-top!" said this marvellous specimen of metamorphosis. "I said I would speak with thee."

"What is your business with my comrade, my young chick of the game?" said Adam Woodcock, willing to step in to his companion's assistance, though totally at a loss to account for the sudden disappearance of all Roland's usual smartness and presence of mind.

"Nothing to you, my old cock of the perch," replied the gallant; "go mind your hawk's castings. I guess by your bag and your gauntlet that you are squire of the body to a sort of kites."

He laughed as he spoke, and the laugh reminded Roland so irresistibly of the hearty fit of risibility, in which Catharine had indulged at his expense when they first met in the old nunnery, that he could scarce help exclaiming, "Catherine Seyton, by Heavens!"—He checked the exclamation, however, and only said, "I think, sir, we two are not totally strangers to each other."

"We must have met in our dreams then," said the youth; "and any days are too busy to remember what I think on at nights."

"Or apparently to remember upon one day those whom you may have seen on the preceding eve," said Roland Græme.

The youth in his turn cast on him a look of some surprise, as he replied, "I know no more of what you mean than does the horse I ride on—if there be offence in your words, you shall find me, as ready to take it as any lad in Lothian."

"You know well," said Roland, "though it pleases you to use the language of a stranger, that with you I can have no purpose to quarrel."

"Let me do mine errand, then, and be rid of you," said the page. "Step hither this way, out of that old leathern fiat's hearing."

They walked into the recess of the window, which Roland had left upon the youth's entrance into the apartment. The messenger then turned his back on the company, after casting a hasty and sharp glance around to see if they were observed. Roland did the same, and the page in the purple gantle thus addressed him, taking at the same time from under his cloak a short but beautifully-wrought sword, with the hilt and ornaments upon the sheath of silver, minutely chased and over-gilded—"I bring you this weapon from a friend, who gives it you under the solemn condition, that you will not unathe it until you are commanded by your rightful Sovereign. For your warmth of temper

is known, and the presumption with which you intrude yourself into the quarrels of others; and, therefore, this is laid upon you as a penance by those who wish you well, and whose hand will influence your destiny for good or for evil. This is what I was charged to tell you. So if you will give a fair word for a fair sword, and pledge your promise, with hand and glove, good and well; and if not, I will carry back Caliburn to those who sent it."

"And may I not ask who these are?" said Roland Grème, admiring at the same time the beauty of the weapon thus offered him.

"My commission in no way leads me to answer such a question," said he of the purple mantle.

"But if I am offended," said Roland, "may I not draw to defend myself?"

"Not *this* weapon," answered the sword-bearer; "but you have your own at command, and, besides, for what do you wear your poniard?"

"For no good," said Adam Woodcock, who had now approached close to them, "and that I can witness as well as any one."

"Stand back, fellow," said the messenger; "thou hast an intrusive curious face, that will come by a buffet if it is found where it has no concern." ••

"A buffet, my young Master Malapert!" said Adam, drawing back, however; "best keep down fist, or, by Our Lady, buffet will beget buffet!"

"Be patient, Adam Woodcock," said Roland Grème;—"and let me pray you, fair sir, since by such addition you choose for the present to be addressed, may I not barely unsheathe this fair weapon, in pure simplicity of desire to know whether so fair a hilt and scabbard are matched with a befitting blade?"

"By no manner of means," said the messenger; "at a word, you must take it under the promise that you never draw it until you receive the commands of your lawful Sovereign, or you must leave it alone."

"Under that condition, and coming from your friendly hand, I accept of the sword," said Roland, taking it from his hand; "but credit me, that if we are to work together in any weighty enterprise, as I am induced to believe, some confidence and openness on your part will be necessary to give the right impulse to my zeal—I press for no more at present, it is enough that you understand me."

"I understand you!" said the page, exhibiting the appearance of feigned surprise in his turn.—"Renounce me if I do!—here you stand jiggling, and smugling, and looking cunning, as if there were some mighty matter of intrigue and common understanding betwixt you and me, whom you never set your eyes on before!"

"What!" said Roland Grème, "will you deny that we have met before?"

"Marry that I will, in any Christian court," said the other page.

"And will you also deny," said Roland, "that it was recommended to us to study each other's features well, that in whatever disguise the time might impose upon us, each should recognize in the other the secret agent of a mighty work! Do not you remember, that Sister Magdalen and Dame Bridget —"

The messenger here interrupted him, shrugging up his shoulders, with a look of compassion, "Bridget and Magdalen! why, this is madness

and dreaming! Hark ye, Master Holly-top, your wits are gone on wool-gathering; comfort yourself with a candle, thatch your brain-sick noddle with a woollen night-cap, and so God be with you!"

As he concluded this polite parting address, Adam Woodcock, who was again seated by the table on which stood the now empty can, said to him, "Will you drink a cup, young man, in the way of courtesy, now you have done your errand, and listen to a good song?" and without waiting for an answer, he commenced his ditty,—

"The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded us full lang —"

It is probable that the good wine had made some innovation in the falconer's brain, otherwise he would have recollected the danger of introducing any thing like political or polemical pleasantry into a public assemblage, at a time when men's minds were in a state of great irritability. To do him justice, he perceived his error, and stopped short so soon as he saw that the word Pope had at once interrupted the separate conversations of the various parties which were assembled in the apartment; and that many began to draw themselves up, bridle, look big, and prepare to take part in the impending brawl; while others, more decent and cautious persons, hastily paid down their lawing, and prepared to leave the place ere bad should come to worse.

• And to worse it was soon likely to come; for no sooner did Woodcock's ditty reach the ear of the stranger page, than, uplifting his riding-rod, he exclaimed, "He who speaks irreverently of the Holy Father of the church in my presence, is the cub of a ferocious wolf-bitch, and I will switch him as I would a mongrel-cur."

"And I will break thy young pate," said Adam, "if thou darest to lift a finger to me." And then, in defiance of the young Drawcauir's threats, with a stout heart and dauntless accent, he again uplifted the staff.

"The Pope, that pagan full of pride,
Hath blinded —"

But Adam was able to proceed no farther, being himself unfortunately blinded by a stroke of the impatient youth's switch across his eyes. Enraged at once by the smart and the indignity, the falconer started up, and darkling as he was, for his eyes wavered too fast to permit his seeing any thing, he would soon have begun at close grips with his insolent adversary, had not Roland Grème, contrary to his nature, played for once the prudent man and the peacemaker, and thrown himself betwixt them, imploring Woodcock's patience. "You know not," he said, "with whom you have to do.—And thou," addressing the messenger, who stood stubbornly laughing at Adam's rage, "get thee gone, whoever thou art; if thou be'st what I guess thee, thou well knowest there are earnest reasons why thou shouldst."

"Thou hast hit it right for once, Holly-top," said the gallant; "though I guess you drew your bow at a venture.—Hear, hear, let this yeoman have a bottle of wine to wash the smart out of his eyes—and there is a French crown for him." So saying, he threw the piece of money on the table, and left the apartment, with a quick yet steady pace, looking firmly at right and left, as if to defy interrup-

tion : and snapping his fingers at two or three respectable burghers, who, declaring it was a shame that any one should be suffered to rant and ruffle in defence of the Pope, were labouring to find the hilts of their swords, which had got for the present unhappily entangled in the folds of their cloaks. But, as the adversary was gone ere any of them had reached his weapon, they did not think it necessary to unsheathe the cold iron, but merely observed to each other, "This is more than masterful violence, to see a poor man stricken in the face just for singing a ballad against the whore of Babylon ! If the Pope's champions are to be sangsters in our very change-houses, we all soon have the old shavelings back again."

"The provost should look to it," said another, "and have some five or six armed with partisans, to come in upon the first whistle, to teach these callants their lesson. For, look you, neighbour Lugleather, it is not for decent householders like ourselves to be brawling with the godless, grooms and pert pages of the nobles, that are bred up to little else save bloodshed and blasphemy."

"For all that, neighbour," said Lugleather, "I would have curried that youngster as properly as ever I curried a lamb's hide, had not the hilt of my bilbo been for the instant beyond my grasp ; and before I could turn my girdle, gone was my master !"

"Ay," said the others, "the devil go with him, and peace abide with us — I give my rede, neighbours, that we pay the lawing, and be stepping homeward, like brother and brother ; for old Saint Giles's is tolling curfew, and the street grows dangerous at night."

With that the good burghers adjusted their cloaks, and prepared for their departure, while he that seemed the briskest of the three, laying his hand on his Andrea Ferrara, observed, "that they that spoke in praise of the Pope on the High-gate of Edinburgh, had best bring the sword of Saint Peter to defend them."

While the ill-humour excited by the insolence of the young aristocrat was thus evaporating in empty menace, Roland Greeme had to control the far more serious indignation of Adam Woodcock. "Why, man, it was but a switch across the mazzard — blow your nose, dry your eyes, and you will see all the better for it."

"By this light, which I cannot see," said Adam Woodcock, "thou hast been a false friend to me, young man — neither taking up my rightful quarrel, nor letting me fight it out myself."

"Fy for shame, Adam Woodcock," replied the youth, determined to turn the tables on him, and become in turn the counsellor of good order and peaceable demeanour — "I say, fy for shame ! — Alas, that you will speak thus ! Here are you sent with me, to prevent my innocent youth getting into snarcs —"

"I wish your innocent youth were cut short with a halter, with all my heart," said Adam, who began to see which way the admonition tended.

"— And instead of setting before me," continued Roland, "an example of patience and sobriety becoming the falconer of Sir Halbert Glendinning, you gaff me off I know not how many flagons of ale, besides a gallon of wine, and a full measure of strong waters."

"It was but one small pottle," said poor Adam,

whom consciousness of his own indiscretion now reduced to a merely defensive warfare.

"It was enough to pottle you handsomely, however," said the page — "And then, instead of going to bed to sleep off your liquor, must you sit singing your rolistering songs about popes and pagans, till you have got your eyes almost switched out of your head ; and but for my interference, whom your drunken ingratitude accuses of deserting you, you galliard would have cut your throat, for he was whipping out a whinger as broad as my hand, and as sharp as a razor — And these are lessons for an inexperienced youth ! — Oh, Adam ! out upon you ! out upon you !"

"Marry, amen, and with all my heart," said Adam ; "out upon my folly for expecting any thing but impertinent rillery from a page like thee, that if he saw his father in a scrape, would laugh at him, instead of lending him aid."

"Nay, but I will lend you aid," said the page, still laughing, "that is, I will lend thee aid to thy chamber, good Adam, where thou shalt sleep off wine and ale, ire and indignation, and awake the next morning with as much fair wit as nature has blessed thee withal. Only one thing I will warn thee, good Adam, that henceforth and for ever, when thouallest at me for being somewhat hot at hand, and rather too prompt to out with poniard or so, thy admonition shall serve as a prologue to the memorable adventure of the switching of Saint Michael's."

With such condoling expressions he got the crest-fallen falconer to his bed, and then retired to his own pallet, where it was some time ere he could fall asleep. If the messenger whom he had seen were really Catherine Seyton, what a masculine virago and terribler must she be ! and stored with what an inextinguishable command of insolence and assurance ! — The brass on her brow would furnish the front of twenty pages ; "and I should know," thought Roland, "what that amounts to — And yet, her features, her look, her light gait, her laughing eye, the art with which she disposed the mantle to shew no more of her limbs than needs must be seen — I am glad she had at least that grace left — the voice, the smile — it must have been Catherine Seyton, or the devil in her likeness ! One thing is good, I have silenced the eternal predications of that ass, Adam Woodcock, who has set up for being a preacher and a governor over me, so soon as he has left the hawk's mew behind him."

And with this comfortable reflection, joined to the happy indifference which youth hath for the events of the morrow, Roland Greeme fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XX.

Now have you left me from my staff, my guide,
Who taught my youth, as men teach trained falcons,
To use my strength discreetly — I am left
Of comrade and of counsel.

Old Play.

In the gray of the next morning's dawn, there was a loud knocking at the gate of the hostelry ; and those without, proclaiming that they came in the name of the Regent, were instantly admitted. A moment or two afterwards, Michael Wing-the-wind stood by the bedside of our travellers.

"Up! up!" he said, "there is no slumber where Murray hath work ado."

Both sleepers sprang up, and began to dress themselves.

"You, old friend," said Wing-the-wind to Adam Woodcock, "must to horse instantly, with this packet to the Monks of Kennaghair; and with this," delivering them as he spoke, "to the Knight of Avenel."

"As much as commanding the monks to angul their election, I'll warrant me, of an Abbot," quoth Adam Woodcock, as he put the packets into his bag, "and charging my master to see it done—To hawk at one brother with another, is less than fair play, methinks."

"Fash not thy beard about it, old boy," said Michael, "but betake thee to the saddle presently; for if these orders are not obeyed, there will be bare walls at the Kirk of Saint Mary's, and it may be at the Castle of Avenel to boot; for I heard my Lord of Morton loud with the Regent, and we are at a pass that we cannot stand with him anent trifles."

"Dost," said Adam, "touching the Abbot of Unreason—what say they to that outbreak?—An they be shrewishly disposed, I were better pilch the packets to Satan, and take the other side of the Border for my bield."

"Oh, that was passed over as a jest, since there was little harm done.—But, hark thee, Adam," continued his comrade, "if there was a dozen vacant abbacies in your road, whether of jest or earnest, reason or unreason, draw thou never one of their mitres over thy brows—The time is not fitting, man!—besides, our Maiden longs to clip the neck of a fat churchman."

"She shall never sheer mine in that capacity," said the falconer, while he knotted the kerchief in two or three double folds around his sunburnt bull-neck, calling out at the same time, "Master Roland, Master Roland, make haste! we must back to perch and mew, and, thank Heaven, more than our own wit, with our bones whole, and without a stab in the stomach."

"Nay, but," said Wing-the-wind, "the page goes not back with you, the Regent has other employment for him."

"Saints and sorrows!" exclaimed the falconer—"Master Roland Graeme to remain here, and I to return to Avenel!—Why, it cannot be—the child cannot manage himself in this wide world without me, and I question if he will stoop to any other whistle than mine own; there are times I myself can hardly bring him to my lure."

It was at Roland's tongue's end, to say something concerning the occasion they had for using mutually each other's prudence, but the real anxiety which Adam evinced at parting with him, took away his disposition to such ungracious raillery. The falconer did not altogether escape, however, for, in turning his face towards the lattice, his friend Michael caught a glimpse of it, and exclaimed, "I prithee, Adam Woodcock, what hast thou been doing with these eyes of thine! They are swelled to the starting from the socket!"

"Nought in the world," said he, after casting a deprecating glance at Roland Graeme, "but the effect of sleeping in this d—d truckle without a pillow."

"Why, Adam Woodcock, thou must be grown

strangely dainty," said his old companion; "I have known thee sleep all night with no better pillow than a bush of ling, and start up with the sun, as elegy as a falcon; and now thine eyes resemble—"

"Tush, man, what signifies how mine eyes look now?" said Adam—"let us but roast a crab-apple, pour a pottle of ale on it, and bathe our throats withal, thou shalt see a change in me."

"And thou wilt be in heart to sing thy jolly ballad about the Pope," said his comrade.

"Ay, that I will," replied the falconer, "that is, when we have left this quiet town five miles behind us, if you will take your hobby and ride so far on my way."

"Nay, that I may not," said Michael—"I can but stop to partake your morning draught, and see you fairly to horse—I will see that they saddle them, and toast the crab for thee, without loss of time."

During his absence the falconer took the page by the hand—"May I never hood hawk again," said the good-natured fellow, "if I am not as sorry to part with you as if you were a child of mine own, craving pardon for the freedom—I cannot tell what makes me love you so much, unless it be for the reason that I loved the vicious devil of a brown galloway nigg whom my master the Knight called Satan, till Master Warden changed his name to Seyton; for he said it was over boldness to call a beast after the King of Darkness—"

"And," said the page, "it was over boldness in him, I trow, to call a vicious brute after a noble family."

"Well," proceeded Adam, "Seyton or Satan, I loved that nag over every other horse in the stable—There was no sleeping on his back—he was for ever fidgeting, bolting, rearing, biting, kicking, and giving you work to do, and maybe the measure of your back on the heather to the boot of it all. And I think I love you better than any lad in the castle, for the self-same qualities."

"Thanks, thanks, kind Adam. I regard myself bound to you for the good estimation in which you hold me."

"Nay, interrupt me not," said the falconer—"Satan was a good nag—but I say I think I shall call the two eyes after you, the one Roland, and the other Graeme; and, while Adam Woodcock lives, be sure you have a friend—Here is to thee, my dear son."

Roland most heartily returned the grasp of the hand, and Woodcock, having taken a deep draught, continued his farewell speech.

"There are three things I warn you against, Roland, now that you are to tread this weary world without my experience to assist you. In the first place, never draw dagger on slight occasion—every man's doublet is not so well suited as a certain abbot's that you wot of. Secondly, fly not at every pretty girl, like a merlin at a thrush—you will not always win a gold chain for your labour—and, by the way, here I return to you your fanfaron—keep it close, it is weighty, and may benefit you at a pinch more ways than one. Thirdly, and to conclude, as our worthy preacher says, beware of the pottle-pot—it has drenched the judgment of wiser men than you. I could bring some instances of it, but I dare say it needeth not; for if you should forget your own mishaps, you will scarce fail to remember mine—And so farewell, my dear son."

Roland returned his good wishes, and failed not to send his humble duty to his kind Lady, charging the falconer, at the same time, to express his regret that he should have offended her, and his determination so to bear him in the world that she would not be ashamed of the generous protection she had afforded him.

The falconer embraced his young friend, mounted his stout, round-made, trotting nag, which the serving-man, who had attended him, held ready at the door, and took the road to the southward. A still and heavy sound echoed from the horse's feet, as if indicating the sorrow of the good-natured rider. Every hoof-tread seemed to tap upon Roland's heart as he heard his comrade withdraw with so little of his usual alert activity, and felt that he was once more alone in the world.

He was roused from his reverie by Michael Wing-the-wind, who reminded him that it was necessary they should instantly return to the palace, as my Lord Regent went to the Sessions early in the morning. They went thither accordingly, and Wing-the-wind, a favourite old domestic, who was admitted nearer to the Regent's person and privacy, than many whose posts were more ostensible, soon introduced Græme into a small matted chamber, where he had an audience of the present head of the troubled State of Scotland. The Earl of Murray was clad in a sad-coloured morning-gown, with a cap and slippers of the same cloth, but even in this easy *déshabillé*, held his sheathed rapier in his hand, a precaution which he adopted when receiving strangers, rather in compliance with the earnest remonstrances of his friends and partisans, than from any personal apprehensions of his own. He answered with a silent nod the respectful obeisance of the page, and took one or two turns through the small apartment in silence, fixing his keen eye on Roland, as if he wished to penetrate into his very soul. At length he broke silence.

"Your name is, I think, Julian Græme?"

Roland Græme, my lord, not Julian," replied the page.

"Right—I was misled by some trick of my memory—Roland Græme, from the *Débatable Land*.—Roland, thou knowest the duties which belong to a lady's service?"

"I should know them, my lord," replied Roland "having been bred so near the person of my Lady of Avenel; but I trust never more to practise them, as the Knight hath promised——"

"Be silent, young man," said the Regent, "I am to speak, and you to hear and obey. It is necessary that, for some space at least, you shall again enter into the service of a lady, who, in rank, hath no equal in Scotland; and this service accomplished, I give thee my word as Knight and Prince, that it shall open to you a course of ambition, such as may well gratify the aspiring wishes of one whom circumstances entitle to entertain much higher views than thou. I will take thee into my household and near to my person; or, at your own choice, I will give you the command of a foot-company—either is a preferment which the proudest lord in the land might be glad to ensure for a second son."

"May I presume to ask, my lord," said Roland, observing the Earl paused for a reply, "to whom my poor services are in the first place destined?"

"You will be told hereafter," said the Regent; and then, as if overcoming some internal reluctance

to speak farther himself, he added, "or why should I not myself tell you, that you are about to enter into the service of a most illustrious—most unhappy lady—into the service of Mary of Scotland."

"Of the Queen, my lord!" said the page, unable to repress his surprise.

"Of her who was the Queen!" said Murray, with a singular mixture of displeasure and embarrassment in his tone of voice. "You must be aware, young man, that her son reigns in her stead."

He sighed from an emotion, partly natural, perhaps, and partly assumed.

"And am I to attend upon her Grace in her place of imprisonment, my lord?" again demanded the page, with a straightforward and hardy simplicity, which somewhat disconcerted the sage and powerful statesman.

"She is not imprisoned," answered Murray, angrily; "God forbid she should—she is only sequestered from state affairs, and from the business of the public, until the world be so effectually settled, that she may enjoy her natural and uncontrolled freedom, without her royal disposition being exposed to the practices of wicked and designing men. It is for this purpose," he added, "that while she is to be furnished, as right is, with such attendance as may befit her present secluded state, it becomes necessary that those placed around her are persons on whose prudence I can have reliance. You see, therefore, you are at once called on to discharge an office most honourable in itself, and so to discharge it that you may make a friend of the Regent of Scotland. Thou art, I have been told, a singularly apprehensive youth; and I perceive by thy look, that thou dost already understand what I would say on this matter. In this schedule your particular points of duty are set down at length—but the sum required of you is fidelity—I mean fidelity to myself and to the state. You are, therefore, to watch every attempt which is made, or inclination displayed, to open any communication with any of the lords who have become banders in the west—with Hamilton, Seyton, with Fleming, or the like. It is true that my gracious sister, reflecting upon the ill chances that have happened to the state of this poor kingdom, from evil counsellors who have abused her royal nature in time past, hath determined to sequester herself from state affairs in future. But it is our duty, as acting for and in the name of our infant nephew, to guard against the evils which may arise from any mutation or vacillation in her royal resolutions. Wherefore, it will be thy duty to watch, and report to our lady mother, whose guest our sister is for the present, whatever may infer a disposition to withdraw her person from the place of security in which she is lodged, or to open communication with those without. If, however, your observation should detect any thing of weight, and which may excite mere suspicion, fail not to send notice by an especial messenger to me directly, and this ring shall be thy warrant to order horse and man on such service.—And now begone. If there be half the wit in thy head that there is apprehension in thy look, thou fully comprehendest all that I would say—Serve me faithfully, and sure as I am belted knight, thy reward shall be great."

Roland Græme made an obeisance, and was about to depart.

The Earl signed to him to remain. "I have trusted thee deeply," he said, "young man, for thou

at the only one of her suite who has been sent to me by my own recommendation. Her gentlewomen are of her own nomination—it is too hard to have bayted her that privilege, though some there were who reckoned it inconsistent with sure policy. Thou art young and handsome. Mingle in their follies, and see they cover not deeper designs under the appearance of female levity—if they do mine, do thou countermine. For the rest, bear all decorum and respect to the person of thy mistress—she is a princess, though a most unhappy one, and hath been a queen, though now, alas! no longer such. Pay, therefore, to her all honour and respect, consistent with thy fidelity to the King and me—and now, farewell.—Yot stay—you travel with Lord Lindsey, a man of the old world, rough and honest, though untaught; see that thou offend him not, for he is not patient of railleury, and thou, I have heard, art a crack-halter.” This he said with a smile, then added, “I could have wished the Lord Lindsey’s mission had been intrusted to some other and more gentle noble.”

“And wherefore should you wish that, my lord?” said Morton, who even then entered the apartment; “the council have decided for the best—we have had but too many proofs of this lady’s stubbornness of mind, and the oak that resists the sharp steel axe, must be riven with the rugged iron wedge.—And this is to be her page!—My Lord Regent hath doubtless instructed you, young man, how you shall guide yourself in these matters; I will add but a little hint on my part. You are going to the castle of a Douglas, where treachery never thrives—the first moment of suspicion will be the last of your life. My kinsman, William Douglas, understands no railleury, and if he once have cause to think you false, you will waver in the wind from the castle battlements ere the sun set upon his anger.—And is the lady to have an almoner withal?”

“Occasionally, Douglas,” said the Regent; “it were hard to deny the spiritual consolation which she thinks essential to her salvation.”

“You are ever too soft-hearted, my lord—What! a false priest to communicate her lamentations, not only to our unfrinds in Scotland, but to the Guises, to Rome, to Spain, and I know not where!”

“Fear not,” said the Regent, “we will take such order that no treachery shall happen.”

“Look to it then,” said Morton; “you know my mind respecting the wench you have consented she shall receive as a waiting-woman—one of a family which, of all others, has ever been devoted to her, and inimical to us. Had we not been wary, she would have been purveyed of a page as much to her purpose as her waiting-damsel. I hear a rumour that an old mad Romish pilgrimer, who passes for at least half a saint among them, was employed to find a fit subject.”

“We have escaped that danger at least,” said Murray, “and converted it into a point of advantage, by sending this boy of Glendinning’s—and for her waiting-damsel, you cannot grudge her one poor maiden instead of her four noble Marys and all their silken train.”

“I care not so much for the waiting-maiden,” said Morton, “but I cannot brook the almoner—I think priests of all persuasions are much like each other—Here is John Knox, who made such a noble puller-down, is ambitious of becoming a setter-up, and a founder of schools and colleges out of the

Abbey lands, and bishops’ rents, and other spoils of Rome, which the nobility of Scotland have won with their sword and bow, and with which he would endow new bives to sing the old drone.”

“John is a man of God,” said the Regent, “and his scheme is a devout imagination.”

The pedate smile with which this was spoken, left it impossible to conjecture whether the words were meant in approbation, or in derision, of the plan of the Scottish Reformer. Turning then to Roland Gryme, as if he thought he had been long enough a witness of this conversation, he bade him get him presently to horse, since my Lord of Lindsey was already mounted. The page, amidst his reverence, and left the apartment.

Guided by Michael Wing-the-wind, he found his horse ready saddled and prepared for the journey in front of the palace porch, where hovered about a score of mount-arms, whose leader shewed no small symptoms of surly impatience.

“Is this the jackanape page for whom we have waited thus long?” said he to Wing-the-wind.—“And my Lord Ruthven will reach the castle long before us.”

Michael assented, and added, that the boy had been detailed by the Regent to receive some parting instructions. The leader made an inarticulate sound in his throat, expressive of sullen acquiescence, and calling to one of his domestic attendants, “Edward,” said he, “take the gallant into your charge, and let him speak with no one else.”

He then addressed, by the title of Sir Robert, an elderly and respectable-looking gentleman, the only one of the party who seemed above the rank of a retainer or domestic, and observed, that they must get to horse with all speed.

“During this discourse, and while they were riding slowly along the street of the suburb, Roland had time to examine more accurately the looks and figure of the Baron, who was at their head.

Lord Lindsey of the Byres was rather touched than stricken with years. His upright stature and strong limbs, still shewed him fully equal to all the exertions and fatigues of war. His thick eyebrows, now partially grizzled, lowered over large eyes full of dark fire, which seemed yet darker from the uncommon depth at which they were set in his head. His features, naturally strong and harsh, had their sternness exaggerated by one or two scars received in battle. These features, naturally calculated to express the harsher passions, were shaded by an open steel cap, with a projecting front, but having no visor, over the gorget of which fell the black and grizzled beard of the grim old Baron, and totally hid the lower part of his face. The rest of his dress was a loose buff-coat, which had once been lined with silk and adorned with embroidery, but which seemed much stained with travel, and damaged with cuts, received probably in battle. It covered a corset, which had once been of polished steel, fairly gilded, but was now somewhat injured with rust. A sword of antiquemake and uncommon size, framed to be wielded with both hands, a kind of weapon which was then beginning to go out of use, hung from his neck in a baldric, and was so disposed as to traverse his whole person, the huge hilt appearing over his left shoulder, and the point reaching well-nigh to the right heel, and jarring against his spur as he walked. This unwieldy weapon could only be unsheathed by pulling

the handle over the left shoulder—for no human arm was long enough to draw it in the usual manner. The whole equipment was that of a rude warrior, negligent of his exterior even to misanthropical sullowness; and the short, harsh, haughty tone, which he used towards his attendants, belonged to the same unpolished character.

The personage who rode with Lord Lindesay, at the head of the party, was an absolute contrast to him, in manner, form, and features. His thin and silky hair was already white, though he seemed not above forty-five or fifty years old. His tone of voice was soft and insinuating—his form thin, spare, and bent by an habitual stoop—his pale cheek was expressive of shrewdness and intelligence—his eye was quick though placid, and his whole demeanour mild and conciliatory. He rode an ambling nag, such as were used by ladies, clergymen, or others of peaceful professions—wore a riding habit of black velvet, with a cap and feather of the same hue, fastened up by a golden medal—and for show, and as a mark of rank rather than for use, carried a walking-sword, (as the short light rapiers were called,) without any other arms, offensive or defensive.

The party had now quitted the town, and proceeded, at a steady trot, towards the west.—As they prosecuted their journey, Roland Græme would gladly have learned something of its purpose and tendency, but the countenance of the personage next to whom he had been placed in the train, discouraged all approach to familiarity. The Baron himself did not look more grim and inaccessible than his feudal retainer, whose grisly beard fell over his mouth like the portcullis before the gate of a castle, as if for the purpose of preventing the escape of any word, of which absolute necessity did not demand the utterance. The rest of the train seemed under the same taciturn influence, and journeyed on without a word being exchanged amongst them—more like a troop of Carthusian friars than a party of military retainers. Roland Græme was surprised at this extremity of discipline; for even in the household of the Knight of Avenel, though somewhat distinguished for the accuracy with which decorum was enforced, a journey was a period of license; during which jest and song, and every thing within the limits of becoming mirth and pastime, were freely permitted. This unusual silence was, however, so far acceptable, that it gave him time to bring any shadow of judgment which he possessed to council on his own situation and prospects, which would have appeared to any reasonable person in the highest degree dangerous and perplexing.

It was quite evident that he had, through various circumstances not under his own control, formed contradictory connections with both the contending factions, by whose strife the kingdom was distracted, without being properly an adherent of either. It seemed also clear, that the same situation in the household of the Deposed Queen, to which he was now promoted by the influence of the Regent, had been destined to him by his enthusiastic grandmother, Magdalen Græme; for on this subject, the words which Morton had dropped had been a ray of light; yet it was no less clear that these two persons, the one the declared enemy, the other the enthusiastic votary, of the Catholic religion,—the one at the head of the King's new government, the

other, who regarded that government as a criminal usurpation,—must have required and expected very different services from the individual whom they had thus united in recommending. It required very little reflection to foresee that these contradictory claims on his services might speedily place him in a situation where his honour as well as his life might be endangered. But it was not in Roland Græme's nature to anticipate evil before it came, or to prepare to combat difficulties before they arrived. "I will see this beautiful and unfortunate Mary Stewart," said he, "of whom we have heard so much, and then there will be time enough to determine whether I will be kingman or queensman. None of them can say I have given word or promise to either of their factions; for they have led me up and down like a blind Billy, without giving me any light into what I was to do. But it was lucky that Grim Douglas came into the Regent's closet this morning, otherwise I had never got free of him without plighting my troth to do all the Earl would have me, which seemed, after all, but foul play to the poor imprisoned lady, to place her page as an espion on her."

Skip-ping thus lightly over a matter of such consequence, the thoughts of the harebrained boy went to wool-gathering after more agreeable topics. Now he admired the Gothic towers of Barnbougle, rising from the sea-beaten rock, and overlooking one of the most glorious landscapes in Scotland—and now he began to consider what notable sport for the hounds and the hawks must be afforded by the variegated ground over which they travelled—and now he compared the steady and dull trot at which they were then prosecuting their journey, with the delight of sweeping over hill and dale in pursuit of his favourite sports. As, under the influence of these joyous recollections, he gave his horse the spur, and made him execute a gambade, he instantly incurred the censure of his grave neighbour, who hinted to him to keep the pace, and move quietly and in order, unless he wished such notice to be taken of his eccentric movements as was likely to be very displeasing to him.

The rebuke and the restraint under which the youth now found himself, brought back to his recollection his late good-humoured and accommodating associate and guide, Adam Woodcock; and from that topic his imagination made a short flight to Avenel Castle, to the quiet and unconfined life of its inhabitants, the goddess of his early protectress, not forgetting the denizens of its stables, kennels, and hawk-mews. In a brief space, all these subjects of meditation gave way to the remembrance of that riddle of womankind, Catherine Seyton, who appeared before the eye of his mind—now in her female form, now in her male attire—now in both at once—like some strange dream, which presents to us the same individual under two different characters at the same instant. Her mysterious present also recurred to his recollection—the sword which he now wore at his side, and which he was not to draw, save by command of his legitimate Sovereign! But the key of this mystery he judged he was likely to find in the issue of his present journey.

With such thoughts passing through his mind, Roland Græme accompanied the party of Lord Lindesay to the Queen's-Ferry, which they passed in vessels that lay in readiness for them. They

encountered no adventure whatever in their passage, excepting one horse being lamed in getting into the boat, an accident very common on such occasions, until a few years ago, when the Ferry was completely regulated. What was more peculiarly characteristic of the olden age, was the discharge of a culverin at the party from the battlements of the old castle of Rosyth, on the north side of the Ferry, the lord of which happened to have some public or private quarrel with the Lord Lindsey, and took this mode of expressing his resentment. The insult, however, as it was harmless, remained unnoticed and unavenged, not did any thing else occur worth notice until the band had come where Lochleven spread its magnificent sheet of waters to the beams of a bright summer sun.

The ancient castle, which occupies an island nearly in the centre of the lake, recalled to the page that of Avenel, in which he had been nurtured. But the lake was much larger, and adorned with several islets besides that on which the fortress was situated; and instead of being embosomed in hills like that of Avenel, had upon the southern side only a splendid mountainous stream, being the descent of one of the Lomond hills, and on the other was surrounded by the extensive and fertile plain of Kinross. Roland Grème looked with some degree of dismay on the water-girdled fortress, which then, as now, consisted only of one large donjon-keep, surrounded with a court-yard, with two round flanking-towers at the angles, which contained within its circuit some other buildings of inferior importance. A few old trees, clustered together near the castle, gave some relief to the air of desolate seclusion; but yet the page, while he gazed upon a building so sequestered, could not but feel for the situation of a captive Princess doomed to dwell there, as well as for his own. "I must have been born," he thought, "under the star that presides over ladies and lakes of water, for I cannot by any means escape from the service of the one, or from dwelling in the other. But if they allow me not the fair freedom of my sport and exercise, they shall find it as hard to confine a wild-drake, as a youth who can swim like one."

The band had now reached the edge of the water, and one of the party advancing displayed Lord Lindsey's pennon, waving it repeatedly to and fro, while that Baron himself blew a clamorous blast on his bugle. A banner was presently displayed from the roof of the castle in reply to these signals, and one of two figures were seen busied as if unmooring a boat which lay close to the islet.

"It will be some time ere they can reach us with the boat," said the companion of the Lord Lindsey; "should we not do well to proceed to the town, and array ourselves in some better order, ere we appear before—"

"You may do as you list, Sir Robert," replied Lindsey, "I have neither time nor temper to waste on such vanities. She has cost me many a hard ride, and must not now take offence at the threadbare cloak and soiled doublet that I am arrayed in. It is the livery to which she has brought all Scotland."

"Do not speak so harshly," said Sir Robert; "if she hath done wrong, she hath deeply abied it; and in losing all real power, she would not deprive

her of the little external homage due at once to a lady and a princess."

"I say to you once more, Sir Robert Melville," replied Lindsey, "do as you will—for me, I am now too cold to dink myself as a gallant to grace the bower of dames."

"The bowers of dames, my lord!" said Melville, looking at the rude old tower—"is it you dark and grated castle, the prison of a captive Queen, to which you give so gay a name?"

"Name it as you list," replied Lindsey; "had the Regent desired to send an envoy capable to speak to a captive Queen, there are many gallants in his court who would have courted the occasion to make speeches out of Amadis of Gaul, or the Mirror of Knighthood. But when he sent blunt old Lindsey, he knew he would speak to a misguided woman, as her former misdoings and her present state render necessary. I sought not this employment—it has been thrust upon me; and I will not cumber myself with more form in the discharge of it, than needs must be tacked to such an occupation."

So saying, Lord Lindsey threw himself from horseback, and, wrapping his riding-cloak around him, lay down at easy length upon the sward, to await the arrival of the boat, which was now seen rowing from the castle towards the shore. Sir Robert Melville, who had also dismounted, walked at short turns to and fro upon the bank, his arms crossed on his breast, often looking to the castle, and displaying in his countenance a mixture of sorrow and of anxiety. The rest of the party sat like statues on horseback, without moving so much as the points of their lances, which they held upright in the air.

As soon as the boat approached a rude quay or landing-place, near to which they had stationed themselves, Lord Lindsey started up from his recumbent posture, and asked the person who steered, why he had not brought a larger boat with him to transport his retinue.

"So please you," replied the boatman, "because it is the order of our lady, that we bring not to the castle more than four persons."

"Thy lady is a wise woman," said Lindsey, "to suspect me of treachery!—Or, had I intended it, what was to hinder us from throwing you and your comrades into the lake, and filling the boat with my own fellows?"

The steersman, on hearing this, made a hasty signal to his men to back their oars, and hold off from the shore which they were approaching.

"Why, thou ass," said Lindsey, "thou didst not think that I meant thy fool's head serious harm? Hark thee, friend—with fewer than three servants I will go no whither—Sir Robert Melville will require at least the attendance of one domestic; and it will be at your peril and your lady's to refuse us admission, come hither as we are on matters of great national concern."

The steersman answered with firmness, but with great civility of expression, that his orders were positive to bring no more than four into the island, but he offered to row back to obtain a revial of his orders.

"Do so, my friend," said Sir Robert Melville, after he had in vain endeavoured to persuade his stubborn companion to consent to a temporary abatement of his train. "row back to the castle, with it

will be no better, and obtain thy lady's orders to transport the Lord Lindesay, myself, and our retinue hither."

"And hearken," said Lord Lindesay, "take with you this page, who comes as an attendant on your lady's guest. — Dismount, sirrah," said he, addressing Roland, "and embark with them in that boat."

"And what is to become of my horse?" said Graeme; "I am answerable for him to my master?"
 "I will relieve you of the charge," said Lindesay; "thou wilt have little enough to do with horse, saddle, or bridle, for ten years to come. — Thou mayest take the halter as thou wilt — it may stand thee in a turn."

"If I thought so," said Roland — but he was interrupted by Sir Robert Melville, who said to him, good-humouredly, "Dispute it not, young friend — resistance can do no good, but may well run thee into danger."

Roland Graeme felt the justice of what he said, and, though neither delighted with the matter or manner of Lindesay's address, deemed 't best to submit to necessity, and to embark without farther remonstrance. The men plied their oars. The quay, with the party of horse stationed near it, receded from the page's eyes — the castle and the islet seemed to draw near in the same proportion, and in a brief space he landed under the shadow of a huge old tree which overhung the landing place. The steersman and Graeme leaped ashore; the boatmen remained lying on their oars ready for farther service.

CHAPTER XXI.

Could valour aught avail or people's love,
 France had not wept Navarre's brave Henry slain;
 If wit or beauty could companion move,
 The throne of Scotland had not wept in vain.

Eclog in a Royal Manuscript — Lewis.

At the gate of the court-yard of Lochleven appeared the stately form of the Lady of Lochleven, a female whose early charms had captivated James V., by whom she became mother of the celebrated Regent Murray. As she was of noble birth (being a daughter of the House of Mar) and of great beauty, her intimacy with James did not prevent her being afterwards sought in honourable marriage, by many gallants of the time, among whom she had preferred Sir William Douglas of Lochleven. But well has it been said,

"Our pleasant vies
 Are made the whips to scourge us" —

The station which the Lady of Lochleven now held as the wife of a man of high rank and interest, and the mother of a lawful family, did not prevent her nourishing a painful sense of degradation, even while she was proud of the talents, the power, and the station of her son, now prime ruler of the state, but still a pledge of her illicit intercourse. "Had James done to her," she said, in her secret heart, "the justice he owed her, she had seen in her son, as a source of unmixed delight and of unchastened pride, the lawful monarch of Scotland, and one of the ablest who ever swayed the sceptre. The House of Mar, not inferior in antiquity or grandeur to that of Drummond, would then have also boasted a

Queen among its daughters, and escaped the stain attached to female frailty, even when it has a royal lover for its apology." While such feelings preyed on a bosom naturally proud and severe, they had a corresponding effect on her countenance, where, with the remains of great beauty, were mingled traits indicative of inward discontent and peevish melancholy. It perhaps contributed to increase this habitual temperament, that the Lady Lochleven had adopted uncommonly rigid and severe views of religion, imitating in her ideas of reformed faith the very worst errors of the Catholics, in limiting the benefit of the gospel to those who profess their own speculative tenets.

In every respect, the unfortunate Queen Mary, now the compulsory guest, or rather prisoner, of this sullen lady, was obnoxious to her hostess. Lady Lochleven disliked her as the daughter of Mary of Guise, the legal possessor of those rights over James's heart and hand, of which she conceived herself to have been injuriously deprived; and yet more so as the professor of a religion which she detested worse than Paganism.

Such was the dame, who, with stately mien, and sharp yet handsome features, shrouded by her black velvet coif, interrogated the domestic who steered her barge to the shore, what had become of Lindesay and Sir Robert Melville. The man related what had passed, and she smiled scornfully as she replied, "Fools must be flattered, not foughten with. — Row back — make thy excuse as thou canst — say Lady Ruthven hath already reached this castle, and that he is impatient for Lord Lindesay's presence. Away with thee, Randal — yet stay — what galopin is that thou hast brought hither?"

"So please you, my lady, he is the page who is to wait upon —"

"Ay, the new male minion," said the Lady Lochleven; "the female attendant arrived yesterday. I shall have a well-ordered house with this lady and her retinue; but I trust they will soon find some others to undertake such a charge. Begone, Randal — and you" (to Roland Graeme) "follow me to the garden."

She led the way with a slow and stately step to the small garden, which, enclosed by a stone wall ornamented with statues, and an artificial fountain in the centre, extended its dull parterres on the side of the court-yard, with which it communicated by a low and arched portal. Within the narrow circuit of its formal and lifted walks, Mary Stewart was now learning to perform the weary part of a prisoner, which, with little interval, she was doomed to sustain during the remainder of her life. She was followed in her slow and melancholy exercise by two female attendants; but, in the first glance which Roland Graeme bestowed upon one so illustrious by birth, so distinguished by her beauty, accomplishments, and misfortunes, he was sensible of the presence of no other than the unhappy Queen of Scotland.

Her face, her form, have been so deeply impressed upon the imagination, that even at the distance of nearly three centuries, it is unnecessary to remind the most ignorant and uninformed reader of the striking traits which characterized that remarkable countenance, which seems at once to combine our ideas of the majestic, the pleasing, and the brilliant, leaving us to doubt whether they express most happily the queen, the beauty, or the accomplished

woman. Who is there, that, at the very mention of Mary Stewart's name, has not her countenance before him, familiar as that of the mistress of his youth, or the favourite daughter of his advanced age? Even those who feel themselves compelled to believe all, or much, of what her enemies laid to her charge, cannot think without a sigh upon a countenance expressive of any thing rather than the foul crimes with which she was charged when living, and which still continue to shade, if not to blacken, her memory. That brow, so truly open and regal—those eyebrows, so regularly graceful, which yet were saved from the charge of regular insipidity by the beautiful effect of the hazel eyes which they overarched, and which seem to utter a thousand histories—the nose, with all its Grecian precision of outline—the mouth so well proportioned, so sweetly formed, as if designed to speak nothing but what was delightful to hear—the dimpled chin—the stately swan-like neck, form a countenance, the like of which we know not to have existed in any other character moving in that class of life, where the actresses as well as the actors command general and undivided attention. "It is in vain to say that the portraits which exist of this remarkable woman are not like each other; for, amidst their discrepancy, each possesses general features which the eye at once acknowledges as peculiar to the vision which our imagination has raised while we read her history for the first time, and which has been impressed upon it by the numerous prints and pictures which we have seen. Indeed we cannot look on the worst of them, however deficient in point of execution, without saying that it is meant for Queen Mary; and no small instance it is of the power of beauty, that her charms should have remained the subject not merely of admiration, but of warm and chivalrous interest, after the lapse of such a length of time. We know that by far the most acute of those who in latter days, have adopted the unfavourable view of Mary's character, longed, like the executioner before his dreadful task was performed, to kiss the fair hand of her on whom he was about to perform so horrible a duty.

Dressed, then, in a deep mourning robe, and with all those charms of face, shape, and manner, with which faithful tradition has made each reader familiar, Mary Stewart advanced to meet the Lady of Lochleven, who, on her part, endeavoured to conceal dislike and apprehension under the appearance of respectful indifference. The truth was, that she had experienced repeatedly the Queen's superiority in that species of disguised yet cutting sarcasm, with which women can successfully avenge themselves for real and substantial injuries. It may be well doubted, whether this talent was not as fatal to its possessor as the many others enjoyed by that highly gifted, but most unhappy female; for, while it often afforded her a momentary triumph over her keepers, it failed not to exasperate their resentment; and the satire and sarcasm in which she had indulged, were frequently retaliated by the deep and bitter hardships which they had the power of inflicting. It is well known that her death was at length hastened by a letter which she wrote to Queen Elizabeth, in which she treated her jealous rival, and the Countess of Shrewsbury, with the keenest irony and ridicule.

As the ladies met together, the Queen said,

holding her head at the same time in return to the obeisance of the Lady Lochleven, "We are this day fortunate—we enjoy the company of our amiable hostess at an unusual hour, and during a period which we have hitherto been permitted to give to our private exercise. But our good hostess knows well she has at all times access to our presence, and need not observe the useless ceremony of requiring our permission."

"I am sorry my presence is deemed an intrusion by your Grace," said the Lady of Lochleven. "I came but to announce the arrival of an addition to your train," motioning with her hand toward Roland Cromie; "a circumstance to which ladies are seldom indifferent."

"Oh! I crave your ladyship's pardon; and am bent on the earth with obligations for the kindness of my nobles—or my sovereigns, shall I call them!—who have permitted me such a respectable addition to my personal retinue."

"They have indeed studied, madam," said the Lady of Lochleven, "to shew their kindness towards your Grace—something at the risk perhaps of sound policy, and I trust their doings will not be misconstrued."

"Impossible!" said the Queen; "the bounty which permits the daughter of so many kings, and who yet is Queen of the realm, the attendance of two waiting-women and a boy, is a grace which Mary Stewart can never sufficiently acknowledge. Why! my train will be equal to that of any country dame in this your kingdom of Fife, saving but the lack of a gentleman-usher, and a pair or two of blue-coated serving-men. But I must not forget, in my selfish joy, the additional trouble and charges to which this magnificent augmentation of our train will put our kind hostess, and the whole house of Lochleven. It is this prudent anxiety, I am aware, which clouds your brow, my worthy lady. But be of good cheer; the crown of Scotland has many a fair manor, and your affectionate son, and my no less affectionate brother, will endow the good knight your husband with the best of them, ere Mary should be dismissed from this hospitable castle from your ladyship's lack of means to support the charges."

"The Douglasses of Lochleven, madam," answered the lady, "have known for ages how to discharge their duty to the State, without looking for reward, even when the task was both irksome and dangerous."

"Nay! but, my dear Lochleven," said the Queen, "you are over scrupulous—I pray you accept of a goodly manor; what should support the Queen of Scotland in this her princely court, saving her own crown-lands—and who should minister to the wants of a mother, save an affectionate son like the Earl of Murray, who possesses so wonderfully both the power and inclination!—Or said you it was the danger of the task which clouded your smooth and hospitable brow!—No doubt, a page is a formidable addition to my body-guard of females; and I bethink me it must have been for that reason that my Lord of Lindsay refused even now to venture within the reach of a force so formidable, without being attended by a competent retinue."

The Lady Lochleven started, and looked some thing surprised; and Mary, suddenly changing her manner from the smooth ironical affectation of

mildness to an accent of austere command, and drawing up at the same time her fine person, said, with the full majesty of her rank, "Yes! Lady of Lochleven; I know that Ruthven is already in the castle, and that Lindesay waits on the bank the return of your barge to bring him hither along with Sir Robert Melville. For what purpose do these nobles come—and why am I not in ordinary decency apprised of their arrival?"

"Their purpose, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "they must themselves explain—but a formal annunciation were needless, where your Grace hath attendants who can play the espial so well."

"Alas! poor Fleming," said the Queen, turning to the elder of the female attendants, "thou wilt be tried, condemned, and gibbeted; for a spy in the garrison, because thou didst chance to cross the great hall while my good Lady of Lochleven was parleying at the full pitch of her voice with her pilot Randal. Put black wool in thy ears, girl, as you value the wearing of them longer. Remember, in the Castle of Lochleven, ears and tongues are matters not of use, but for show merely. Our good hostess can hear, as well as speak, for us all. We excuse your farther attendance, my lady hostess," she said, once more addressing the object of her resentment, "and retire to prepare for an interview with our rebel lords. We will use the ante-chamber of our sleeping apartment as our hall of audience. You, young man," she proceeded, addressing Roland Grème, and at once softening the ironical sharpness of her manner into good-humoured raillery, "you, who are all our male attendance, from our Lord High Chamberlain down to our least galopin, follow us to prepare our court."

She turned, and walked slowly towards the castle. The Lady of Lochleven folded her arms, and smiled in bitter resentment, as she watched her retiring steps.

"Thy whole male attendance!" she muttered, repeating the Queen's last words, "and well for thee had it been had thy train never been larger;" then turning to Roland, in whose way she had stood while making this pause, she made room for him to pass, saying at the same time, "Art thou already eaves-dropping? I follow thy mistress, minion, and, if thou wilt, tell her what I have now said."

Roland Grème hastened after his royal mistress and her attendants, who had just entered a postern-gate communicating betwixt the castle and the small garden. They ascended a winding-stair as high as the second story, which was in a great measure occupied by a suite of three rooms, opening into each other, and assigned as the dwelling of the captive Princess. The outermost was a small hall or ante-room, within which opened a large parlour, and from that again the Queen's bedroom. Another small apartment, which opened into the same parlour, contained the beds of the gentlewomen in waiting.

Roland Grème stopped, as became his station, in the outermost of these apartments, there to await such orders as might be communicated to him. From the grated window of the room he saw Lindesay, Melville, and their followers disembark; and observed that they were met at the castle gate by a third noble, to whom Lindesay exclaimed, in his loud harsh voice, "My Lord of Ruthven, you have the start of us!"

At this instant, the page's attention was called to a burst of hysterical sobs from the inner apartment, and to the hurried ejaculations of the terrified females, which led him almost instantly to hasten to their assistance. When he entered, he saw that the Queen had thrown herself into the large chair which stood nearest the door, and was sobbing for breath in a strong fit of hysterical affection. The elder female supported her in her arms, while the younger bathed her face with water and with tears alternately.

"Hasten, young man!" said the elder lady, in alarm, "fly—call in assistance—she is swooning!"

But the Queen ejaculated in a faint and broken voice, "Stir not, I charge you!—call no one to witness—I am better—I shall recover instantly." And, indeed, with an effort which seemed like that of one struggling for life, she sat up in her chair, and endeavoured to resume her composure, while her features yet trembled with the violent emotion of body and mind which she had undergone. "I am ashamed of my weakness, girls," she said, taking the hands of her attendants; "but it is over—and I am Mary Stewart once more. The savage tones of that man's voice—my knowledge of his insolence—the name which he named—the purpose for which they come, may excuse a moment's weakness—and it shall be a moment's only." She snatched from her head the curch or cap, which had been disordered during her hysterical agony—shook down the thick clustered tresses of dark brown which had been before veiled under it—and, drawing her slender fingers across the labyrinth which they formed, she arose from the chair, and stood like the inspired image of a Grecian prophetess, in a mood which partook at once of sorrow and pride, of smiles and of tears. "We are ill appointed," she said, "to meet our rebel subjects; but, as far as we may, we will strive to present ourselves as becomes their Queen. Follow me, my maidens," she said; "what says thy favourite song, my Fleming?"

'My maids, come to my dressing-bower,
And deck my nut-brown hair;
Where'er ye laid a plait before,
Look ye lay ten times fair.'

Alas! she added, when she had repeated with a smile these lines of an old ballad, "violence has already robbed me of the ordinary decorations of my rank; and the few that nature gave me have been destroyed by sorrow and by fear." Yet while she spoke thus, she again let her slender fingers stray through the wilderness of the beautiful tresses which veiled her kingly neck and swelling bosom, as if, in her agony of mind, she had not altogether lost the consciousness of her unrivalled charms. Roland Grème, on whose youth, inexperience, and ardent sense of what was dignified and lovely, the demeanour of so fair and high-born a lady wrought like the charm of a magician, stood rooted to the spot with surprise and interest, longing to hazard his life in a quarrel so far as that which Mary Stewart's must needs be. She had been bred in France—she was possessed of the most distinguished beauty—she had reigned a Queen, and a Scottish Queen, to whom knowledge of character was as essential as the use of vital air. In all these capacities, Mary was, of all women on the earth, most alert at perceiving and using the advantages which her charms gave her over almost all

who came within the sphere of their influence. She cast on Roland a glance which might have melted a heart of stone. "My poor boy," she said, with a feeling partly real, partly politic, "thou art a stranger to us—sent to this doleful captivity from the society of some tender mother, or sister, or maiden, with whom you had freedom to tread a gay measure round the Maypoles. I grieve for you; but you are the only male in my limited household—wilt thou obey my orders?"

"To the death, madam," said Græme, in a determined tone.

"Then keep the door of mine apartment," said the Queen; "keep it till they offer actual violence, or till we shall be fitly arrayed to receive these intrusive visitors."

"I will defend it till they pass over my body," said Roland Græme; any hesitation which he had felt concerning the line of conduct he ought to pursue, being completely swept away by the impulse of the moment.

"Not so, my good youth," answered Mary; "not so, I command thee. If I have one faithful subject beside me, much need, God wot, I have to care for his safety. Resist them but till they are put to the shame of using actual violence, and then give way I charge you. Remember my commands." And, with a smile expressive at once of favour and of authority, she turned from him, and, followed by her attendants, entered the bedroom.

The youngest paused for half a second ere she followed her companion, and made a signal to Roland Græme with her hand. He had been already long aware that this was Catherine Seyton—a circumstance which could not much surprise a youth of quick intellects, who recollected the sort of mysterious discourse which had passed betwixt the two matrons at the deserted manery, and on which his meeting with Catherine in this place seemed to cast so much light. Yet such was the engrossing effect of Mary's presence, that it surmounted for the moment even the feelings of a youthful lover; and it was not until Catherine Seyton had disappeared, that Roland began to consider in what relation they were to stand to each other. "She held up her hand to me in a commanding manner," he thought; "perhaps she wanted to confirm my purpose for the execution of the Queen's commands; for I think she could scarce purpose to spare me with the sort of discipline which she administered to the groom in the frieze-jacket, and to poor Adam Woodcock. But we will see to that anon; meantime, let us do justice to the trust reposed in us by this unhappy Queen. I think my Lord of Murray will himself own that it is the duty of a faithful page to defend his lady against intrusion on her privacy."

Accordingly, he stepped to the little vestibule, made fast, with lock and bar, the door which opened from thence to the large staircase, and then sat himself down to attend the result. He had not long to wait; a rude and strong hand first essayed to lift the latch, then pushed and shook the door with violence, and, when it resisted his attempt to open it, exclaimed, "Undo the door there, you within!"

"Why, and at whose command," said the page, "am I to undo the door of the apartments of the Queen of Scotland?"

Another vain attempt, which made hinge and bolt

jingle, shewed that the impatient applicant without would willingly have entered altogether regardless of his challenge; but at length an answer was returned.

"Undo the door, on your peril—the Lord Lindsey comes to speak with the Lady Mary of Scotland."

"The Lord Lindsey, as a Scottish noble," answered the page, "must await his Sovereign's leisure."

An earnest altercation ensued amongst those without, in which Roland distinguished the remarkable harsh voice of Lindsey in reply to Sir Robert Melville, who appeared to have been using some soothing language—"No! no! no! I tell thee, no! I will place a petard against the door rather than be banished by a profligate woman, and bearded by an insolent footboy."

"Yet, at least," said Melville, "let me try fair means in the first instance. Violence to a lady would stain your scutcheon for ever. Or await till my Lord Ruthven comes."

"I will await no longer," said Lindsey; "it is high time the business were done, and we on our return to the council. But thou mayest try thy fair play, as thou callest it, while I cause my train to prepare the petard. I came hither provided with as good gunpowder as blew up the Kirk of Field."

"For God's sake, be patient," said Melville; and, approaching the door, he said, as speaking to those within, "Let the Queen know that I, her faithful servant, Robert Melville, do entreat her, for her own sake, and to prevent worse consequences, that she will undo the door, and admit Lord Lindsey who brings a mission from the Council of State."

"I will do your errand to the Queen," said the page, "and report to you her answer."

He went to the door of the bedchamber, and tapping against it gently, it was opened by the elderly lady, to whom he communicated his errand, and returned with directions from the Queen to admit Sir Robert Melville and Lord Lindsey. Roland Græme returned to the vestibule, and opened the door accordingly, into which the Lord Lindsey strode, with the air of a soldier who has fought his way into a conquered fortress; while Melville, deeply dejected, followed him more slowly.

"I draw you to witness, and to record," said the page, to this last, "that, save for the especial commands of the Queen, I would have made good the entrance, with my best strength, and my best blood, against all Scotland."

"Be silent, young man," said Melville, in a tone of grave rebuke; "add not brands to fire—this is no time to make a flourish of thy boyish chivalry."

"She has not appeared even yet," said Lindsey, who had now reached the midst of the parlour or audience-room; "how call you this trifling?"

"Patience, my lord," replied Sir Robert, "time presses not—and Lord Ruthven hath not as yet descended."

At this moment the door of the inner apartment opened, and Queen Mary presented herself, advancing with an air of peculiar grace and majesty, and seeming totally unruffled, either by the visit, or by the rude manner in which it had been enforced. Her dress was a robe of black velvet; a small rus

open in front, gave a full view of her beautifully-formed chin and neck, but veiled the bosom. On her head she wore a small cap of lace, and a transparent white veil hung from her shoulders over the long black robe, in large loose folds, so that it could be drawn at pleasure over the face and person. She wore a cross of gold around her neck, and had her rosary of gold and ebony hanging from her girdle. She was closely followed by her two ladies, who remained standing behind her during the conference. Even Lord Lindesay, though the rudest noble of that rude age, was surprised into something like respect by the unconcerned and majestic mien of her, whom he had expected to find frantic with impotent passion, or dissolved in useless and vain sorrow, or overwhelmed with the fears likely in such a situation to assail fallen royalty.

"We fear we have detained you, my Lord of Lindesay," said the Queen, while she curtsied with dignity in answer to his reluctant obeisance; "but a female does not willingly receive her visitors without some minutes spent at the toilette. Men, my lord, are less dependant on such ceremonies."

Lord Lindesay, casting his eye down on his own travel-stained and disordered dress, mistook something of a hasty journey, and the Queen paid her greeting to Sir Robert Melville with courtesy, and even, as it seemed, with kindness. There was then a dead pause, during which Lindesay looked towards the door, as if expecting with impatience the colleague of their embassy. The Queen alone was entirely unembarrassed; and, as if to break the silence, she addressed Lord Lindesay, with a glance at the large and cumbersome sword which he wore, as already mentioned, hanging from his neck.

"You have there a trusty and a weighty travelling companion, my lord. I trust you expected to meet with no enemy here, against whom such a formidable weapon could be necessary! It is, methinks, somewhat a singular ornament for a court, though I am, as I well need to be, too much of a Stewart to fear a sword."

"It is not the first time, madam," replied Lindesay, bringing round the weapon so as to rest its point on the ground, and leaning one hand on the huge cross-handle, "it is not the first time that this weapon has intruded itself into the presence of the House of Stewart."

"Possibly, my lord," replied the Queen, "it may have done service to my ancestors—Your ancestors were men of loyalty."

"Ay, madam," replied he, "service it hath done; but such as kings love neither to acknowledge nor to reward. It was the service which the knife renders to the tree when trimming it to the quick, and depriving it of the superfluous growth of rank and unfruitful suckers, which rob it of nourishment."

"You talk riddles, my lord," said Mary; "I will hope the explanation carries nothing insulting with it."

"You shall judge, madam," answered Lindesay. "With this good sword was Archibald Douglas, Earl of Angus, girded on the memorable day when he acquired the name of Bell-the-Cat, for dragging from the presence of your great-grandfather, the third James of the race, a crew of minions, flatterers, and favourites, whom he hanged over the

bridge of Lander, as a warning to such reptiles how they approach a Scottish throne. With this same weapon, the same inflexible champion of Scottish honour and nobility slew at one blow Spens of Kilsopinde, a courtier of your grandfather, James the Fourth, who had dared to speak lightly of him in the royal presence. They fought near the brook of Fala; and Bell-the-Cat, with this blade, sheared through the thigh of his opponent, and lopped the limb as easily as a shepherd's boy slices a twig from a sapling."

"My lord," replied the Queen, reddening, "my nerves are too good to be alarmed even by this terrible history.—May I ask how a blade so illustrious passed from the House of Douglas to that of Lindesay?—Methinks it should have been preserved as a consecrated relic, by a family who have held all that they could do against their king, to be done in favour of their country."

"Nay, madam," said Melville, anxiously interfering, "ask not that question of Lord Lindesay—And you, my lord, for shame—for decency—furbear to reply to it."

"It is time that this lady should hear the truth," replied Lindesay.

"And be assured," said the Queen, "that she will be moved to anger by none that you can tell her, my lord. There are cases in which just scorn has always the mastery over just anger."

"Then know," said Lindesay, "that upon the field of Carberry-hill, when that false and infamous traitor and murderer, James, sometime Earl of Bothwell, and nicknamed Duke of Orkney, offered to do personal battle with any of the associated nobles who came to drag him to justice, I accepted his challenge, and was by the noble Earl of Morton gifted with his good sword that I might therewith fight it out—Alas! so help me Heaven, had his presumption been one grain more, or his cowardice one grain less, I should have done such work with this good steel on his traitorous corpse, that the bounds and carion-crows should have found their morsels daintily carved to their use!"

The Queen's courage well-nigh gave way at the mention of Bothwell's name—a name connected with such a train of guilt, shame, and disaster. But the prolonged boast of Lindesay gave her time to rally herself, and to answer with an appearance of cold contempt—"It is easy to slay an enemy who enters not the lists. But had Mary Stewart inherited her father's sword as well as his sceptre, the boldest of her rebels should not upon that day have complained that they had no one to cope withal. Your lordship will forgive me if I abridge this conference. A brief description of a bloody fight is long enough to satisfy a lady's curiosity; and unless my Lord of Lindesay has something more important to tell us than of the deeds which old Bell-the-Cat achieved, and how he would himself have emulated them, had time and tide permitted, we will retire to our private apartment, and you, Fleming, shall finish reading to us yonder little treatise *Des Rodomontades Espagnoles*."

"Tarry, madam," said Lindesay, his complexion reddening in his turn; "I know your quick wit too well of old to have sought an interview that you might sharpen its edge at the expense of my honour. Lord Ruthven and myself, with Sir Robert Melville as a concurrent, come to your Grace on the part of the Secret Council, to tender to you what

much concerns the safety of your own life and the welfare of the State."

"The Secret Council?" said the Queen; "by what powers can it subvert or act, while I, from whom it holds its character, am here detained under unjust restraint? But it matters not—what concerns the welfare of Scotland shall be acceptable to Mary Stewart, come from whatever quarter it will—and for what concerns her own life, she has lived long enough to be weary of it, even at the age of twenty-five.—Where is your colleague, my lord?—why tarries he?"

"He comes, madam," said Melville, and Lord Ruthven entered at the instant, holding in his hand a packet. As the Queen returned his salutation she became deadly pale, but instantly recovered herself by dint of strong and sudden resolution, just as the noble, whose appearance seemed to excite such emotions in her bosom, entered the apartment in company with George Douglas, the youngest son of the Knight of Lochleven, who, during the absence of his father and brethren, acted as Seneschal of the Castle, under the direction of the elder Lady Lochleven, his father's mother.

CHAPTER XXII.

I give this heavy weight from off my head,
And this unwieldy sceptre from my hand;
With mine own tears I wash away my balm,
With my own hand I give away my crown;
With mine own tongue deny my sacred state,
With mine own breath release all ducous oaths.

Richard II.

LORD RUTHVEN had the look and bearing which became a soldier and a statesman, and the martial cast of his form and features procured him the popular epithet of Greysteil, by which he was distinguished by his intimates, after the hero of a metrical romance then generally known. His dress, which was a buff-coat embroidered, had a half-military character, but exhibited nothing of the sordid negligence which distinguished that of Lindsay. But the son of an ill-fated sire, and the father of a yet more unfortunate family, bore in his look that cast of inauspicious melancholy, by which the physiognomists of that time pretended to distinguish those who were predestined to a violent and unhappy death.

The terror which the presence of this nobleman impressed on the Queen's mind, arose from the active share he had borne in the slaughter of David Rizzio; his father having presided at the perpetration of that abominable crime, although so weak from long and wasting illness, that he could not endure the weight of his armour, having arisen from a sick-bed to commit a murder in the presence of his Sovereign. On that occasion his son also had attended and taken an active part. It was little to be wondered at, that the Queen, considering her condition when such a deed of horror was acted in her presence, should retain an instinctive terror for the principal actors in the murder. She returned, however, with grace the salutation of Lord Ruthven, and extended her hand to George Douglas, who kneeled, and kissed it with respect; the first mark of a subject's homage which Roland Grème had seen any of them ren-

der to the captive Sovereign. She returned his greeting in silence, and there was a brief pause, during which the steward of the castle, a man of a sad brow and a severe eye, placed, under George Douglas's directions, a table and writing materials; and the page, obedient to his mistress's dumb signal, advanced a large chair to the side on which the Queen stood, the table thus forming a sort of bar which divided the Queen and her personal followers from her unwelcome visitors. The steward then withdrew after a low reverence. When he had closed the door behind him, the Queen broke silence—"With your favour, my lords, I will sit—my walks are not indeed extensive enough at present to fatigue me greatly, yet I find repose something more necessary than usual."

She sat down accordingly, and, shading her cheek with her beautiful hand, looked keenly and impressively at each of the nobles in turn. Mary Fleming applied her kerchief to her eyes, and Catherine Seyton and Roland Grème exchanged a glance, which shewed that both were too deeply engrossed with sentiments of interest and commiseration for their royal mistress, to think of any thing which regarded themselves.

"I await the purpose of your mission, my lords," said the Queen, after she had been seated for about a minute without a word being spoken,—"I wait your message from those you call the Secret Council.—I trust it is a petition of pardon, and a desire that I will resume my rightful throne, without using with due severity my right of punishing those who have disappointed me of it."

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "it is painful for us to speak harsh truths to a Princess who has long ruled us. But we come to offer, not to implore, pardon. In a word, madam, we have to propose to you off the part of the Secret Council, that you sign these deeds, which will contribute greatly to the pacification of the State, the advancement of God's word, and the welfare of your own future life."

"Am I expected to take these fair words on trust, my lord? or may I hear the contents of these reconciling papers, ere I am asked to sign them?"

"Unquestionably, madam; it is our purpose and wish, you should read what you are required to sign," replied Ruthven.

"Required!" replied the Queen, with some emphasis; "but the phrase suits well the matter—read, my lord."

The Lord Ruthven proceeded to read a formal instrument, running in the Queen's name, and setting forth that she had been called, at an early age, to the administration of the crown and realm of Scotland, and had toiled diligently therein, until she was in body and spirit so wearied out and disgusted, that she was unable any longer to endure the travail and pain of State affairs; and that since God had blessed her with a fair and hopeful son, she was desirous to ensure to him, even while she yet lived, his succession to the crown, which was his by right of hereditary descent. "Wherefore," the instrument proceeded, "we, of the motherly affection we bear to our said son, have renounced and demitted, and by these our letters of free good-will, renounce and demit, the Crown, government, and guiding of the realm of Scotland, in favour of our said son, that he may succeed to us as native Prince."

thereof, as much as if we had been removed by disease, and not by our own proper act. And that this demission of our royal authority may have the more full and solemn effect, and none pretend ignorance, we give, grant, and commit, full and free and plain power to our trusty cousins, Lord Lindsey of the Byres, and William Lord Ruthven, to appear in our name before as many of the nobility, clergy, and burgesses, as may be assembled at Stirling, and there, in our name and behalf, publicly, and in their presence, to renounce the Crown, guidance, and government of this our kingdom of Scotland."

The Queen here broke in with an air of extreme surprise. "How is this, my lords?" she said: "Are my ears turned rebels, that they deceive me with sounds so extraordinary?—And yet it is no wonder that, having conversed so long with rebellion, they should now force its language upon my understanding. Say I am mistaken, my lords—say, for the honour of yourselves and the Scottish nobility, that my right trusty cousins of Lindsey and Ruthven, two barons of warlike fame and ancient line, have not sought the prison-house of their kind mistress for such a purpose as these words seem to imply. Say, for the sake of honour and loyalty, that my ears have deceived me."

"No, madam," said Ruthven gravely, "your ears do not deceive you—they deceived you when they were closed against the preachers of the evangel, and the honest advice of your faithful subjects; and when they were ever open to flattery of pickthinks and traitors, foreign cubiculars and domestic minions. The land may no longer brook the rule of one who cannot rule herself; wherefore, I pray you to comply with the last remaining wish of your subjects and counsellors, and spare yourself and us the farther agitation of matter so painful."

"And is this *all* my loving subjects require of me, my lord?" said Mary, in a tone of bitter irony. "Do they really stint themselves to the easy boon that I should yield up the crown, which is mine by birthright, to an infant which is scarcely more than a year old—fling down my sceptre, and take up a distaff—Oh no! it is too little for them to ask—That other roll of parchment contains something harder to be complied with, and which may more highly task my readiness to comply with the petitions of my lieges."

"This parchment," answered Ruthven, in the same tone of inflexible gravity, and unfolding the instrument as he spoke, "is one by which your Grace constitutes your nearest in blood, and the most honourable and trustworthy of your subjects, James, Earl of Murray, Regent of the kingdom during the minority of the young King. He already holds the appointment from the Secret Council."

The Queen gave a sort of shriek, and, clapping her hands together, exclaimed, "Comes the arrow out of his quiver!—out of my brother's bow!—Alas! I looked for his return from France as my sole, at least my readiest, chance of deliverance.—And yet, when I heard that he had assumed the government, I guessed he would shame to wield it in my name."

"I must pray your answer, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "to the demand of the Council."

"The demand of the Council!" said the Queen;

"may rather the demand of a set of robbers, impatient to divide the spoil they have seized. To such a demand, and sent by the mouth of a traitor, whose scalp, but for my womanish mercy, should long since have stood on the city gates, Mary of Scotland has no answer."

"I trust, madam," said Lord Ruthven, "my being unacceptable to your presence will not add to your obduracy of resolution. It may become you to remember that the death of the minion, Rizzio, cost the house of Ruthven its head and leader. My father, more worthy than a whole province of such vile sycophants, died in exile, and broken-hearted."

The Queen clasped her hands on her face, and, resting her arms on the table, stooped down her head and wept so bitterly, that the tears were seen to find their way in streams between the white and slender fingers with which she endeavoured to conceal them.

"My lords," said Sir Robert Melville, "this is too much rigour. Under your lordships' favour, we came hither, not to revive old griefs, but to find the mode of avoiding new ones."

"Sir Robert Melville," said Ruthven, "we best know for what purpose we were delegated hither, and wherefore you were somewhat unnecessarily sent to attend us."

"Nay, by my hand," said Lord Lindsey, "I know not why we were cumbered with the good knight, unless he comes in place of the lump of sugar which pothecars put into their wholesome but bitter medicaments, to please a froward child—a needless labour, methinks, where men have the means to make them swallow the physic otherwise."

"Nay, my lords," said Melville, "ye best know your own secret instructions. I conceive I shall best obey mine in striving to mediate between her Grace and you."

"Be silent, Sir Robert Melville!" said the Queen, arising, and her face still glowing with agitation as she spoke. "My kinsman, Fleming—I shame that traitors should have power to move me thus.—Tell me, proud lords," she added, wiping away the tears as she spoke, "by what earthly warrant can liege subjects pretend to challenge the rights of an anointed Sovereign—to throw off the allegiance they have vowed, and to take away the crown from the head on which Divine warrant hath placed it?"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "I will deal plainly with you. Your reign, from the dismal field of Pinkie-clough, when you were a babe in the cradle, till now that ye stand a grown dame before us, hath been such a tragedy of losses, disasters, civil dissensions, and foreign wars, that the like is not to be found in our chronicles. The French and English have, with one consent, made Scotland the battle-field on which to fight out their own ancient quarrel.—For ourselves, every man's hand hath been against his brother, nor hath a year passed over without rebellion and a lazar-house of nobles, and oppressing of the commons. We may endure it no longer, and therefore, as a prince, to whom God hath refused the gift of hearkening to wise counsel, and on whose dealings and projects no blessing hath ever descended, we pray you to give way to other rule and governance of the land, that a remnant may yet be saved to this distracted realm."

"My lord," said Mary, "it seems to me that you sifing on my unhappy and devoted head those evils, which, with far more justice, I may impute to your own turbulent, wild, and untameable dispositions — the frantic violence with which you, the Magnates of Scotland, enter into feuds against each other, sticking at no cruelty to gratify your wrath, taking deep revenge for the slightest offences, and setting at defiance those wise laws which your ancestors made for stanching of such cruelty, rebelling against the lawful authority, and bearing yourselves as if there were no king in the land; or rather as if each were king in his own premises. And now you throw the blame on me — on me, whose life has been embittered — whose sleep has been broken — whose happiness has been wrecked by your dissensions. Have I not myself been obliged to traverse wilds and mountains, at the head of a few faithful followers, to maintain peace and to put down oppression? Have I not worn harness on my person, and carried pistols at my saddle; fain to lay aside the softness of a woman, and the dignity of a Queen, that I might shew an example to my followers?"

"We grant, madam," said Lindsey, "that the affrays occasioned by your misgovernment, may sometimes have started you in the midst of a masque or galliard; or it may be that such may have interrupted the idolatry of the mass, or the jesuitical counsels of some French ambassador. But the longest and severest journey which your Grace has taken in my memory, was from Hawick to Hermitage Castle; and whether it was for the weal of the State, or for your own honours, rests with your Grace's conscience."

The Queen turned to him with inexpressible sweetness of tone and manner, and that engaging look which Heaven had assigned her, as if to shew that the choicest arts to win men's affections may be given in vain. "Lindsey," she said, "you spoke not to me in this stern tone, and with such scurril taunt, yon fair summer evening, when you and I shot at the butts against the Earl of Mar and Mary Livingstone, and won of them the evening's collation, in the privy garden of Saint Andrews. The Master of Lindsey was then my friend, and vowed to be my soldier. How I have offended the Lord of Lindsey I know not, unless honours have changed manners."

Hardhearted as he was, Lindsey seemed struck with this unexpected appeal, but almost instantly replied, "Madam, it is well known that your Grace could in those days make fools of whomever approached you. I pretend not to have been wiser than others. But gay men and better courtiers soon jostled aside my rude homage, and I think your Grace cannot but remember times, when my awkward attempts to take the manners that pleased you, were the sport of the court-popinjays, the Marys and the Frenchwomen."

"My lord, I grieve if I have offended you through idle gaiety," said the Queen; "and can but say it was most unwittingly done. You are fully revenged; for through gaiety," she said with a sigh, "will I never offend any one more."

"Our time is wasting, madam," said Lord Ruthven; "I must ~~away~~ your decision on this weighty matter which I have submitted to you."

"What, my lord!" said the Queen, "upon the instant, and without a moment's time to delibe-

rate! — Can the Council, as they term themselves, expect this of me?"

"Madam," replied Ruthven, "the Council hold the opinion, that since the fatal term which passed betwixt the night of King Henry's murder and the day of Carberry-hill, your Grace should have held you prepared for the measure now proposed, as the easiest escape from your numerous dangers and difficulties."

"Great God!" exclaimed the Queen; "and is it as a boon that you propose to me, what every Christian king ought to regard as a loss of honour equal to the loss of life! — You take from me my crown, my power, my subjects, my wealth, my state. What, in the name of every saint, can you offer, or do you offer, in requital of my compliance?"

"We give you pardon," answered Ruthven, sternly — "we give you space and means to spend your remaining life in penitence and seclusion — we give you time to make your peace with Heaven, and to receive the pure Gospel, which you have ever rejected and persecuted."

The Queen turned pale at the menace which this speech, as well as the rough and inflexible tones of the speaker, seemed distinctly to infer — "And if I do not comply with your request so fiercely urged, my lord, what then follows?"

She said this in a voice in which female and natural fear was contending with the feelings of insulted dignity. — There was a pause, as if no one cared to return to the question a distinct answer. At length Ruthven spoke: "There is little need to tell to your Grace, who are well read both in the laws and in the chronicles of the realm, that murder and adultery are crimes for which ere now queens themselves have suffered death."

"And where, my lord, or how, found you an accusation so horrible, against her who stands before you?" said Queen Mary. "The foul and odious calumnies which have poisoned the general mind of Scotland, and have placed me a helpless prisoner in your hands, are surely no proof of guilt?"

"We need look for no further proof," replied the stern Lord Ruthven, "than the shameless marriage betwixt the widow of the murdered and the leader of the band of murderers! — They that joined hands in the fated month of May, had already united hearts and counsel in the deed which preceded that marriage but a few brief weeks."

"My lord, my lord!" said the Queen, eagerly, "remember well there were more consents than mine to that fatal union, that most unhappy act of a most unhappy life. The evil steps adopted by sovereigns are often the suggestion of bad counsellors; but these counsellors are worse than fiends who tempt and betray, if they themselves are the first to call their unfortunate princes to answer for the consequences of their own advice. — Heard ye never of a bond by the nobles, my lords, recommending that ill-fated union to the ill-fated Mary? Methinks, were it carefully examined, we should see that the names of Morton, and of Lindsey, and of Ruthven, may be found in that bond, which pressed me to marry that unhappy man. — Ah! stout and loyal Lord Herries, who never knew guile or dishonour, you bent your noble knee to me in vain, to warn me of my danger, and wert yet the first to draw thy good sword in my cause when I suffered for neglecting thy counsel! Faithful knight and true noble, what a difference betwixt thee and

those counsellors of evil, who now threaten my life for having fallen into the snares they spread for me!"

"Madam," said Ruthven, "we know that you are an orator; and perhaps for that reason the Council has sent hither men, whose converse hath been more with the wars, than with the language of the schools or the cabals of state. We but desire to know if, on assurance of life and honour, ye will demit the rule of this kingdom of Scotland?"

"And what warrant have I," said the Queen, "that ye will keep treaty with me, if I should barter my kingly estate for seclusion, and leave to weep in secret?"

"Our honour and our word, madam," answered Ruthven.

"They are too slight and unsolid pledges, my lord," said the Queen; "add at least a handful of thistle-down to give them weight in the balance."

"Away, Ruthven," said Lindsey; "she was ever deaf to counsel, save of slaves and sycophants; let her remain by her refusal, and abide by it!"

"Stay, my lord," said Sir Robert Melville, "or rather permit me to have but a few minutes' private audience with her Grace. If my presence with you could avail aught, it must be as a mediator—do not, I conjure you, leave the castle, or break off the conference, until I bring you word how her Grace shall finally stand disposed."

"We will remain in the hall," said Lindsey, "for half an hour's space; but in despising our words and our pledge of honour, she has touched the honour of my name—let her look herself to the source she has to pursue. If the half hour should pass away without her determining to comply with the demands of the nation, her career will be brief enough."

With little ceremony the two nobles left the apartment, traversed the vestibule, and descended the winding stairs, the clash of Lindsey's huge sword being heard as it rang against each step in his descent. George Douglas followed them, after exchanging with Melville a gesture of surprise and sympathy.

As soon as they were gone, the Queen, giving way to grief, fear, and agitation, threw herself into the seat, wrung her hands, and seemed to abandon herself to despair. Her female attendants, weeping themselves, endeavoured yet to pray her to be composed, and Sir Robert Melville, kneeling at her feet, made the same entreaty. After giving way to a passionate burst of sorrow, she at length said to Melville, "Kneel not to me, Melville—mark me not with the homage of the person, when the heart is far away—Why stay ye behind with the deposed, the condemned! her who has but few hours perchance to live! You have been favoured as well as the rest; why do you continue the empty show of gratitude and thankfulness any longer than they?"

"Madam," said Sir Robert Melville, "so help me Heaven as my need, my heart is as true to you as when you were in your highest place."

"True to me! true to me!" repeated the Queen, with some scorn; "tush, Melville, what signifies the truth which walk hand in hand with my enemies' falsehood!—thy hand and thy sword have never been so well acquainted that I can trust thee in aught where manhood is required—Oh, Seyton, for thy bold father, who is both wise, true, and valiant!"

Roland Grames could withstand no longer his earnest desire to offer his services to a princess so distressed and so beautiful. "If one sword," he said, "madam, can do any thing to back the wisdom of this grave counsellor, or to defend your rightful cause, here is my weapon, and here is my hand ready to draw and use it." And raising his sword with one hand, he laid the other upon the hilt.

As he thus held up the weapon, Catherine Seyton exclaimed, "Methinks I see a token from my father, madam; and immediately crossing the apartment, she took Roland Grames by the skirt of the cloak, and asked him earnestly whence he had that sword."

The page answered with surprise, "Methinks this is no presence in which to jest—Surely, damsel, you yourself best know whence and how I obtained the weapon."

"Is this a time for folly!" said Catherine Seyton; "unsheathe the sword instantly!"

"If the Queen commands me," said the youth, looking towards his royal mistress.

"For shame, maiden!" said the Queen; "wouldst thou instigate the poor boy to enter into useless strife with the two most approved soldiers in Scotland?"

"Is your Grace's cause," replied the page, "I will venture my life upon them!" And as he spoke, he drew his weapon partly from the sheath, and a piece of parchment, rolled around the blade, fell out and dropped on the floor. Catherine Seyton caught it up with eager haste.

"It is my father's hand-writing," she said, "and doubtless conveys his best duteous advice to your Majesty; I know that it was prepared to be sent in this weapon, but I expected another messenger."

"By my faith, fair one," thought Roland, "and if you knew not that I had such a secret missive about me, I was yet more ignorant."

The Queen cast her eye upon the scroll, and remained a few minutes wrapped in deep thought. "Sir Robert Melville," she at length said, "this scroll advises me to submit myself to necessity, and to subscribe the deeds these hard men have brought with them, as one who gives way to the natural fear inspired by the threats of rebels and murderers. You, Sir Robert, are a wise man, and Seyton is both sagacious and brave. Neither, I think, would mislead me in this matter."

"Madam," said Melville, "if I have not the strength of body of the Lord Herries or Seyton, I will yield to neither in zeal for your Majesty's service. I cannot fight for you like these lords, but neither of them is more willing to die for your service."

"I believe it, my old and faithful counsellor," said the Queen, "and believe me, Melville, I did thee but a moment's injustice. Read what my Lord Seyton hath written to us, and give us thy best counsel."

He glanced over the parchment, and instantly replied,—"Oh! my dear and royal mistress, only treason itself could give you other advice than Lord Seyton has here expressed. He, Herries, Huntly, the English ambassador Throgmorton, and others, your friends, are all alike of opinion, that whatever deeds or instruments you execute within these walls, must lose all force and effect, as expected from your Grace by duress, by sufferance of present evil, and fear of men, and harm to ensue on your refusal. Yield, therefore, to the tide, and be assured, that

in subscribing what parchments they present to you, you bind yourself to nothing, since your act of signature wants that which alone can make it valid, the free will of the grantor."

"Ay, so says my Lord Seyton," replied Mary; "yet methinks, for the daughter of so long a line of sovereigns to resign her birthright, become rebels press upon her with threats, argues little of royalty, and will read ill for the fame of Mary in future chronicles. Tush! Sir Robert Melville, the traitors may use black threats and bold words, but they will not dare to put their hands forth on our person."

"Alas! madam, they have already dared so far and incurred such peril by the lengths which they have gone, that they are but one step from the worst and uttermost."

"Surely," said the Queen, her fears again predominating, "Scottish nobles would not lend themselves to assassinate a helpless woman?"

"Bethink you, madam," he replied, "what horrid spectacles have been seen in our day; and what act is so dark, that some Scottish hand has not been found to dare it! Lord Lindsay, besides his natural sullenness and hardness of temper, is the near kinsman of Henry Darnley, and Ruthven has his own deep and dangerous plans. The Council, besides, speak of proofs by writ and word, of a caquet with letters—of 'I know not what.'"

"Ah! good Melville," answered the Queen, "were I as sure of the evenhanded integrity of my judges, as of my own innocence—and yet—"

"Oh! pause, madam," said Melville; "even innocence must sometimes for a season stoop to injurious blame. Besides, you are here—"

He looked round, and paused.

"Speak out, Melville," said the Queen, "never one approached my person who wished to work me evil; and even this poor page, whom I have to-day seen for the first time in my life, I can trust safely with your communication."

"Nay, madam," answered Melville, "in such emergencies, and he being the bearer of Lord Seyton's message, I will venture to say, before him and these fair ladies, whose truth and fidelity I dispute not—I say I will venture to say, that there are other modes besides that of open trial, by which deposed sovereigns often die; and that, as Machiavel saith, there is but one step betwixt a king's prison and his grave."

"Oh! were it but swift and easy for the body," said the unfortunate Princess, "were it but a safe and happy change for the soul, the woman lives not that would take the step so soon as I!—But, alas! Melville, when we think of death, a thousand sins, which we have trod as worms beneath our feet, rise up against us as flaming serpents. Most injuriously do they accuse me of aiding Darnley's death; yet, blessed Lady! I afforded too open occasion for the suspicion—I espoused Bothwell."

"Think not of that now, madam," said Melville, "think rather of the immediate mode of saving yourself and son. Comply with the present unreasonable demands, and trust that better times will shortly arrive."

"Madam," said Roland Gracie, "if it pleases you that I should do so, I will presently swim through the lake, if they refuse me other conveyance to the shore; I will go to the courts successively of England, France, and Spain, and will shew you

have subscribed these vile instruments from no stronger impulse than the fear of death, and I will do battle against them that say otherwise."

The Queen turned her round, and with one of those sweet smiles which, during the era of life's romance, overpay every risk, held her hand towards Roland, but without speaking a word. He kneeled reverently, and kissed it, and Melville again resumed his plea.

"Madam," he said, "time presses, and you must not let those boats, which I see they are even now preparing, put forth on the lake. Here are enough of witnesses—your ladies—this bold youth—myself, when it can serve your cause effectually, for I would not hastily stand committed in this matter—but even without me here is evidence enough to shew, that you have yielded to the demands of the Council through force and fear, but from no sincere and unconstrained assent. Their boats are already manned for their return—only permit your old servant to recall them."

"Melville," said the Queen, "thou art an ancient courtier—when didst thou ever know a Sovereign Prince recall to his presence subjects, who had parted from him on such terms as those on which these envoys of the Council left us, and who yet were recalled without submission or apology!—Let it cost me both life and crown, I will not again command them to my presence."

"Alas! madam, that empty form should make a barrier! If I rightly understand, you are not unwilling to listen to real and advantageous counsel—but your scruple is aged—I hear them returning to ask your final resolution.—Oh! take the advice of the noble Seyton, and you may once more command those who now usurp a triumph over you. But hush! I hear them in the vestibule."

As he concluded speaking, George Douglas opened the door of the apartment, and marshalled in the two noble envoys.

"We come, madam," said the Lord Ruthven, "to request your answer to the proposal of the Council."

"Your final answer," said Lord Lindsay; "for with a refusal you must couple the certainty that you have precipitated your fate, and renounced the last opportunity of making peace with God, and ensuring your longer abode in the world."

"My lords," said Mary, with inexpressible grace and dignity, "the evils we cannot resist we must submit to—I will subscribe these parchments with such liberty of choice as my condition permits me. Were I on yonder shore, with a fleet jennet and ten good and loyal knights around me, I would ascribe my sentence of eternal condemnation as soon as the resignation of my throne. But here, in the Castle of Locheven, with deep water around me—and you, my lords, beside me, I have no freedom of choice.—Give me the pen, Melville, and bear witness to what I do, and why I do it."

"It is our hope your Grace will not suppose yourself compelled, by any apprehensions from us," said the Lord Ruthven, "to execute what must be your own voluntary deed."

The Queen had already stooped towards the table, and placed the parchment before her, with the pen between her fingers, ready for the important act of signature. But when Lord Ruthven had done speaking, she looked up, stopped short, and threw down the pen. "If," she said, "I am expected to

declare I give away my crown of free will, or otherwise than because I am compelled to renounce it by the threat of worse evils to myself and my subjects, I will not put my name to such an untruth—not to gain full possession of England, France, and Scotland!—all once my own, in possession, or by right."

"Beware, madam," said Lindesay, and, snatching hold of the Queen's arm with his own gauntleted hand, he pressed it, in the rudeness of his passion, more closely, perhaps, than he was himself aware of,— "beware how you contend with those who are the stronger, and have the mastery of your fate!"

He held his grasp on her arm, bending his eyes on her with a stern and intimidating look, till both Ruthven and Melville cried shame; and Douglas, who had hitherto remained in a state of apparent apathy, had made a stride from the door, as if to interfere. The rude Baron then quitted his hold, disguising the confusion which he really felt at having indulged his passion to such extent, under a sullen and contemptuous smile.

The Queen immediately began, with an expression of pain, to bare the arm which he had grasped, by drawing up the sleeve of her gown, and it appeared that his gripe had left the purple marks of his iron fingers upon her flesh—"My lord," she said, "as a knight and gentleman, you might have spared my frail arm so severe a proof that you have the greater strength on your side, and are resolved to use it.—But I thank you for it—it is the most decisive token of the terms on which this day's business is to rest.—I draw you to witness, both lords and ladies," she said, shewing the marks of the grasp on her arm, "that I subscribe these instruments in obedience to the sign manual of my Lord of Lindesay, which you may see imprinted on mine arm."

Lindesay would have spoken, but was restrained by his colleague Ruthven, who said to him, "Peace, my lord. Let the Lady Mary of Scotland ascribe her signature to what she will, it is our business to procure it, and carry it to the Council. Should there be debate hereafter on the manner in which it was admitted, there will be time enough for it."

Lindesay was silent accordingly, only muttering within his beard, "I meant not to hurt her; but I think women's flesh be as tender as new-fallen snow."

The Queen meanwhile subscribed the rolls of parchment with a hasty indifference, as if they had been matters of slight consequence, or of mere formality. When she had performed this painful task, she arose, and, having excused to the lords, was about to withdraw to her chamber. Ruthven and Sir Robert Melville made, the first a formal reverence, the second an obeisance, in which his desire to acknowledge his sympathy was obviously checked by the fear of appearing in the eyes of his colleagues too partial to his former mistress. But Lindesay stood motionless, even when they were preparing to withdraw. At length, as if moved by a sudden impulse, he walked round the table which had hitherto been betwixt them and the Queen, kneeled on one knee, took her hand, kissed it, let it fall, and arose—"Lady," he said, "thou art a noble creature, even though thou hast abused God's choicest gifts. I pay that devotion to thy manliness

of spirit, which I could not have paid to the power thou hast long undeservedly wielded—I kneel to Mary Stewart, not to the Queen."

"The Queen and Mary Stewart pity thee alike, Lindesay," said Mary—"alike they pity, and they forgive thee. An honoured soldier hadst thou been by a king's side—leagued with rebels, what art thou but a good blade in the hands of a ruffian!—Farewell, my Lord Ruthven, the smoother but the deeper traitor.—Farewell, Melville—Mayst thou find masters that can understand state policy better, and have the means to reward it more richly, than Mary Stewart.—Farewell, George of Douglas—make your respected grand-dame comprehend that we would be alone for the remainder of the day—God wot, we have need to collect our thoughts."

All bowed and withdrew; but scarce had they entered the vestibule, ere Ruthven and Lindesay were at variance. "Chide not with me, Ruthven," Lindesay was heard to say, in answer to something more indistinctly urged by his colleague—"Chide not with me, for I will not brook it! You put the hangman's office on me in this matter, and even the very hangman hath leave to ask some pardon of those on whom he does his office. I would I had as deep cause to be this lady's friend as I have to be her enemy—thou shouldst see if I spared limb and life in her quarrel."

"Thou art a sweet minion," said Ruthven, "to fight a lady's quarrel, and all for a brunt brow and a tear in the eye! Such toys have been out of thy thoughts this many a year."

"Do me right, Ruthven," said Lindesay. "You are like a polished corslet of steel; it shines more gaudily, but it is not a whit softer—nay, it is five times harder than a Glasgow breastplate of hammered iron. Enough. We know each other."

They descended the stairs, were heard to summon their boats, and the Queen signed to Roland Græme to retire to the vestibule, and leave her with her female attendants.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Give me a morsel on the greensward rather,
Coarse as you will the cooking—Let the fresh spring
Bubble beside my napkin—and the free birds
Twittering and chirping, hop from bough to bough.
To claim the flumbe I leave for perquisites—
Your prison feasts I like not.

The Woodman, a Drama.

A RECESS in the vestibule was enlightened by a small window, at which Roland Græme stationed himself to mark the departure of the lords. He could see their followers mustering on horseback under their respective banners—the western sun glancing on their corslets and steel caps as they moved to and fro, mounted or dismounted, at intervals. On the narrow space betwixt the castle and the water, the Lords Ruthven and Lindesay were already moving slowly to their boats, accompanied by the Lady of Lochleven, her grandson, and their principal attendants. They took a ceremonious leave of each other, as Roland could discern by their gestures, and the boats put off from their landing-place; the boatmen stretched to their oars, and they speedily diminished upon the eye of the idle gazer, who had no better employment than to watch their motions. Such seemed also the occupation of the

¹ See Note L. The Resignation of Queen Mary.

Lady Lochleven and George Douglas, who, returning from the landing-place, looked frequently back to the boats, and at length stopped as if to observe their progress under the window at which Roland Grime was stationed.—As they gazed on the lake, he could hear the lady distinctly say, "And she has bent her mind to save her life at the expense of her kingdom!"

"Her life, madam!" replied her son; "I know not who would dare to attempt it in the castle of my father. Had I dreamt that it was with such purpose that Lindesay insisted on bringing his followers hither, neither he nor they should have passed the iron gate of Lochleven castle."

"I speak not of private slaughter, my son, but of open trial, condemnation, and execution; for with such she has been threatened, and to such threats she has given way. Had she not more of the false Guisian blood than of the royal race of Scotland in her veins, she had bidden them defiance to their teeth.—But it is all of the same complexion, and meanness is the natural companion of profligacy.—I am discharged, forsooth, from intruding on her gracious presence this evening. Go thou, my son, and render the usual service of the meal to this unequipped Queen."

"So please you, lady mother," said Douglas, "I care not greatly to approach her presence."

"Thou art right, my son; and therefore I trust thy prudence, even because I have noted thy caution. She is like an isle on the ocean, surrounded with shelves and quicksands; its verdure fair and inviting to the eye, but the wreck of many a goodly vessel which hath approached it too rashly. But for thee, my son, I fear nought; and we may not, with our honour, suffer her to eat without the attendance of one of us. She may die by the judgment of Heaven, or the fiend may have power over her in her despair; and then we would be touched in honour to show, that in our house, and at our table, she had had all fair play and fitting usage."

Here Roland was interrupted by a smart tap on the shoulders, reminding him sharply of Adam Woodcock's adventure of the preceding evening. He turned round, almost expecting to see the page of Saint Michael's hostelry. He saw, indeed, Catherine Seyton; but she was in female attire, differing, no doubt, a great deal in shape and materials from that which she had worn when they first met, and becoming her birth as the daughter of a great baron, and her rank as the attendant on a princess. "So, fair page," said she, "gave-dropping is one of your page-like qualities, I presume."

"Fair sister," answered Roland, in the same tone, "if some friends of mine be as well acquainted with the rest of our mystery as they are with the arts of swearing, swaggering, and switching, they need ask no page in Christendom for farther insight into his vocation."

"Unless that pretty speech infer that you have yourself had the discipline of the switch since we last met, the probability whereof I nothing doubt, I profess, fair page, I am at a loss to conjecture your meaning. But there is no time to debate it now—they come with the evening meal. Be pleased, Sir Page, to do your duty."

Four servants entered bearing dishes, preceded by the same stern old steward whom Roland had already seen, and followed by George Douglas, already mentioned as the grandson of the Lady of

Lochleven, and who, acting as seneschal, represented, upon this occasion, his father, the Lord of the Castle. He entered with his arms folded on his bosom, and his looks bent on the ground. With the assistance of Roland Grime, a table was suitably covered in the next or middle apartment, on which the domestics placed their burdens with great reverence, the steward and Douglas bending low when they had seen the table properly adorned, as if their royal prisoner had sat at the board in question. The door opened, and Douglas, raising his eyes hastily, cast them again on the earth, when he perceived it was only the Lady Mary Fleming who entered.

"Hear Grace," she said, "will not eat to-night."

"Let us hope she may be otherwise persuaded," said Douglas; "meanwhile, madam, please to see our duty performed."

A servant presented bread and salt on a silver plate, and the old steward cayed for Douglas a small morsel in succession from each of the dishes presented, which he tasted, as was then the custom at the tables of princes, to which death was often suspected to find its way in the disguise of food.

"The Queen will not then come forth to-night!" said Douglas.

"She has so determined," replied the lady.

"Our farther attendance then is unnecessary—we leave you to your supper, fair ladies, and wish you good even."

He retired slowly as he came, and with the same air of deep dejection, and was followed by the attendants belonging to the castle. The two ladies sat down to their meal, and Roland Grime, with ready alacrity, prepared to wait upon them. Catherine Seyton whispered to her companion, who replied with the question spoken in a low tone, but looking at the page—"Is he of gentle blood and well nurtured?"

The answer which she received seemed satisfactory, for she said to Roland, "Sit down, young gentleman, and eat with your sisters incapacity."

"Permit me rather to perform my duty in attending them," said Roland, anxious to shew he was possessed of the high tone of deference prescribed by the rules of chivalry towards the fair sex, and especially to dames and maidens of quality.

"You will find, Sir Page," said Catherine, "you will have little time allowed you for your meal waste it not in ceremony, or you may rue your politeness ere to-morrow morning."

"Your speech is too free, maiden," said the elder lady; "the modesty of the youth may teach you more fitting fashions towards one whom to-day you have seen for the first time."

Catherine Seyton cast down her eyes, but not till she had given a single glance of inexpressible archness towards Roland, whom her more grave companion now addressed in a tone of protection.

"Regard her not, young gentleman—she knows little of the world, save the forms of a country nunnery—take thy place at the board-end, and refresh thyself after thy journey."

Roland Grime obeyed willingly, as it was the first food he had that day tasted; for Lindesay and his followers seemed regardless of human wants. Yet, notwithstanding the sharpness of his appetite, a natural gallantry of disposition, the desire of shewing himself a well-nurtured gentleman, in all courtesies towards the fair sex, and, for aught I know, the pleasure of assisting Catherine Seyton,

kept his attention awake, during the meal, to all those nameless acts of duty and service which gallants of that age were accustomed to render. He carved with neatness and decorum, and selected duly whatever was most delicate to place before the ladies. Ere they could form a wish, he sprung from the table, ready to comply with it—poured wine—tempered it with water—removed and exchanged trenchers, and performed the whole, honours of the table, with an air at once of cheerful diligence, profound respect, and graceful promptitude.

When he observed that they had finished eating he hastened to offer to the elder lady the silver ewer, basin, and napkin, with the ceremony and gravity which he would have used towards Mary herself. He next, with the same decorum, having supplied the basin with fair water, presented it to Catherine Seyton. Apparently, she was determined to disturb his self-possession, if possible; for, while in the act of bathing her hands, she contrived, as it were by accident, to fling some drops of water upon the face of the assiduous assistant. But if such was her mischievous purpose she was completely disappointed; for Roland Græme, internally piquing himself on his self-command, neither lagged nor was discomposed; and all that the maiden gained by her frolic was a severe rebuke from her companion, taxing her with mal-address and indecorum. Catherine replied not, but sat pouting, something in the humour of a spoilt child, who watches the opportunity of wreaking upon some one or other its resentment for a deserved scolding.

The Lady Mary Fleming, in the meanwhile, was naturally well pleased with the exact and reverent observance of the page, and said to Catherine, after a favourable glance at Roland Græme,—"You might well say, Catherine, our companion in captivity was well born and gently nurtured. I would not make him vain by my praise, but his services enable us to dispense with those which George Douglas condescends not to afford us, save when the Queen is herself in presence."

"Umph! I think hardly," answered Catherine. "George Douglas is one of the most handsome gallants in Scotland, and 'tis pleasure to see him even still, when the gloom of Lochleven Castle has shed the same melancholy over him, that it has done over every thing else. When he was at Holyrood, who would have said the young sprightly George Douglas would have been contented to play the lockman here in Lochleven, with no gayer amusement than that of turning the key on two of three helpless women!—a strange office for a Knight of the Bleeding Heart—why does he not leave it to his father or his brothers?"

"Perhaps, like us, he has no choice," answered the Lady Fleming. "But, Catherine, thou hast used thy brief space at court well, to remember what George Douglas was then."

"I used mine eyes, which I suppose was what I was designed to do, and they were worth using there. When I was at the nunnery, they were very useless appurtenances; and now I am at Lochleven, they are good for nothing, save to look over that eternal work of embroidery."

"Yet speak thus, when you have been but a few brief hours amongst us—was this the maiden who would live and die in a dungeon, might she but have permission to wait on her gracious Queen?"

"Nay, if you chide in earnest, my jest is ended," said Catherine Seyton. "I would not yield in attachment to my poor god-mother, to the gravest dame that ever had wise saws upon her tongue, and a double starched ruff around her throat—you know I would not, Dame Mary Fleming, and it is putting shame on me to say otherwise."

"She will challenge the other court lady," thought Roland Græme; "she will to a certainty fling down her glove, and if Dame Mary Fleming hath but the soul to lift it, we may have a combat in the lists!"—But the answer of Lady Mary Fleming was such as turns away wrath.

"Thou art a good child," she said, "my Catherine, and a faithful; but Heaven pity him who shall have one day a creature so beautiful to delight him, and a thing so mischievous to torment him—thou art fit to drive twenty husbands stark mad."

"Nay," said Catherine, resuming the full career of her careless good-humour, "he must be half-witted beforehand, that gives me such an opportunity. But I am glad you are not angry with me in sincerity," casting herself as she spoke into the arms of her friend, and continuing, with a tone of apologetic fondness, while she kissed her on either side of the face; "you know, my dear Fleming, that I have to contend with both my father's lofty pride, and with my mother's high spirit—God bless them! they have left me these good qualities, having small portion to give besides, as times go—and so I am wilful and saucy; but let me remain only a week in this castle, and oh, my dear Fleming, my spirit will be chastised and as humble as thine own."

Dame Mary Fleming's sense of dignity, and love of form, could not resist this affectionate appeal. She kissed Catherine Seyton in her turn affectionately; while, answering the last part of her speech, she said, "Now our Lady forbid, dear Catherine, that you should lose aught that is becoming of what becomes so well your light heart and lively humour. Keep but your sharp wit on this side of madness, and it cannot but be a blessing to us. But let me go, mad wench—I hear her Grace touch her silver call." And, extricating herself from Catherine's grasp, she went towards the door of Queen Mary's apartment, from which was heard the low tone of a silver whistle, which, now only used by the boatswains in the navy, was then, for want of bells, the ordinary mode by which ladies, even of the very highest rank, summoned their domestics. When she had made two or three steps towards the door, however, she turned back, and advancing to the young couple whom she left together, she said, in a very serious though a low tone, "I trust it is impossible that we can, any of us, or in any circumstances, forget, that, few as we are, we form the household of the Queen of Scotland; and that, in her calamity, all boyish mirth and childish jesting can only serve to give a great triumph to her enemies, who have already found their account in objecting to her the lightness of every idle folly, that the young and the gay practised in her court." So saying, she left the apartment.

Catherine Seyton seemed much struck with this remonstrance—She suffered herself to drop into the seat which she had quitted when she went to embrace Dame Mary Fleming, and for some time rested her brow upon her hands; while Roland Græme looked at her earnestly, with a mixture of

emotions which perhaps he himself could neither have analyzed nor explained. As she raised her face slowly from the posture to which a momentary feeling of self-rebuke had depressed it, her eyes encountered those of Roland, and became gradually animated with their usual spirit of malicious drollery, which not unnaturally excited a similar expression in those of the equally volatile page. They sat for the space of two minutes, each looking at the other with great seriousness on their features, and much mirth in their eyes, until at length Catherine was the first to break silence.

"May I pray you, fair sir," she began, very demurely, "to tell me what you see in my face to arouse looks so extremely magacious and knowing as those with which it is your worship's pleasure to honour me! It would seem as there were some wonderful confidence and intimacy betwixt us, fair sir, if one is to judge from your extremely cunning looks; and so help me, Our Lady, as I never saw you but twice in my life before."

"And where were those happy occasions," said Roland, "if I may be bold enough to ask the question?"

"At the nursery of Saint Catherine's," said the damsel, "in the first instance; and, in the second, during five minutes of a certain raid or foray which it was your pleasure to make into the lodging of my lord and father, Lord Seyton, from which, to my surprise, as probably to your own, you returned with a token of friendship and favour, instead of broken bones, which were the more probable reward of your intrusion, considering the prompt ire of the house of Seyton. I am deeply mortified," she added, ironically, "that your recollection should require refreshment on a subject so important; and that my memory should be stronger than yours on such an occasion, is truly humiliating."

"Your own memory is not so exactly correct, fair mistress," answered the page, "seeing you have forgotten meeting the third, in the hostelry of Saint Michael's, when it pleased you to lay your switch across the face of my comrade, in order, I warrant, to shew that, in the house of Seyton, neither the prompt ire of its descendants, nor the use of the doublet and hose, are subject to Salique law, or confined to the use of the males."

"Fair sir," answered Catherine, looking at him with great steadiness, and some surprise, "unless your fair wife have forsaken you, I am at a loss what to conjecture of your meaning."

"By my troth, fair mistress," answered Roland, "and were I as wise a warlock as Michael Scott, I could scarce riddle the dream you read me. Did I not see you last night in the hostelry of Saint Michael's!—Did you not bring me this sword, with command not to draw it save at the command of my native and rightful Sovereign! And have I not done as you required me! Or is the sword a piece of lath—my word a baldrash—my memory a dream—and my eyes good for nought—espials which corbies might pick out of my head!"

"And if your eyes serve you not more truly on other occasions than in your vision of Saint Michael," said Catherine, "I know not, the pain apart, that the corbies would do you any great injury in the deprivation—But hark, the bell—hush, for God's sake, we are interrupted."

The damsel was right; for no sooner had the dull toll of the castle bell begun to resound through

the vaulted apartment, than the door of the vestibule flew open, and the steward, with his severe countenance, his gold chain, and his white rod, entered the apartment, followed by the same train of domestics who had placed the dinner on the table, and who now, with the same ceremonious formality, began to remove it.

The steward remained motionless as some old picture, while the domestics did their office; and when it was accomplished, every thing removed from the table, and the board itself taken from its tressels and disposed against the wall, he said aloud, without addressing any one in particular, and some what in the tone of a herald reading a proclamation, "My noble lady, Dame Margaret Erskine, by marriage Douglas, lets the Lady Mary of Scotland and her attendants to wit, that a servant of the true evangel, her reverend chaplain, will to-night, as usual, expound, lecture, and catechise according to the forms of the congregation of gospellers."

"Hark you, my friend, Mr Dryfedale," said Catherine, "I understand this announcement is a nightly form of yours. Now, I pray you to remark, that the Lady Fleming and I—for I trust your insolent invitation concerns us only—have chosen Saint Peter's pathway to Heaven, so I see no one whom your godly exhortation, catechism, or lecture, can benefit, excepting this poor page, who, being in Satan's hand as well as yourself, had better worship with you than remain to cumber our better-advised devotions."

The page was well-nigh giving a round denial to the assertions which this speech implied, when, remembering what had passed betwixt him and the Regent, and seeing Catherine's finger raised in a monitory fashion, he felt himself, as on former occasions at the Castle of Avenel, obliged to submit to the task of dissimulation, and followed Dryfedale down to the castle chapel, where he assisted in the devotions of the evening.

The chaplain was named Elias Henderson. He was a man in the prime of life, and possessed of good natural parts, carefully improved by the best education which those times afforded. To these qualities were added a faculty of close and terse reasoning; and, at intervals, a flow of happy illustration and natural eloquence. The religious faith of Roland Græme, as we have already had opportunity to observe, rested on no secure basis, but was entertained rather in obedience to his grandmother's behests, and his secret desire to contradict the chaplain of Avenel Castle, than from any fixed or steady reliance which he placed on the Romish creed. His ideas had been of late considerably enlarged by the scenes he had passed through; and feeling that there was shame in not understanding something of those political disputes betwixt the professors of the ancient and of the reformed faith, he listened with more attention than it had hitherto been in his nature to yield on such occasions, to an animated discussion of some of the principal points of difference betwixt the churches. So passed away the first day in the Castle of Lochleven; and those, which followed it were, for some time, of a very monotonous and uniform tenor.

CHAPTER XXIV.

"Tis a weary life this —
Vaults overhead, and grates and bars around me,
And my days and hours spent with sad companions.
Whose thoughts are brooding o'er their own mischances,
Far, far too deeply to take part in mine."

The Woodsman.

THE course of life to which Mary and her little retinue were doomed, was in the last degree secluded and lonely, varied only as the weather permitted or rendered impossible the Queen's usual walk in the garden or on the battlements. The greater part of the morning she wrought with her ladies at those pieces of needlework, many of which still remain proofs of her indefatigable application. At such hours the page was permitted the freedom of the castle and inlet; nay, he was sometimes invited to attend George Douglas when he went sporting upon the lake, or on its margin; opportunities of diversion which were only clouded by the remarkable melancholy which always seemed to brood on that gentleman's brow, and to mark his whole demeanour, — a sadness so profound, that Roland never observed him to smile, or to speak any word unconnected with the immediate object of their exercise.

The most pleasant part of Roland's day, was the occasional space which he was permitted to pass in personal attendance on the Queen and her ladies, together with the regular dinner-time, which he always spent with Dame Mary Fleming and Catherine Seyton. At these periods, he had frequent occasion to admire the lively spirit and inventive imagination of the latter damsel, who was unwearied in her contrivances to amuse her mistress, and to banish, for a time at least, the melancholy which preyed on her bosom. She danced, she sung, she recited tales of ancient and modern times, with that heartfelt exertion of talent, of which the pleasure lies not in the vanity of displaying it to others, but in the enthusiastic consciousness that we possess it ourselves. And yet these high accomplishments were mixed with an air of rusticity and harebrained vivacity, which seemed rather to belong to some village maid, the coquette of the ring around the Maypole, than to the high-bred descendant of an ancient baron. A touch of audacity, altogether short of effrontery, and far less approaching to vulgarity, gave as it were a wildness to all that she did; and Mary, while defending her from some of the occasional censures of her grave companion, compared her to a trained singing-bird escaped from a cage, which practises in all the luxuriance of freedom, and in full possession of the greenwood bough, the airs which it had learned during its earlier captivity.

The moments which the page was permitted to pass in the presence of this fascinating creature, danced so rapidly away, that, brief as they were, they compensated the weary dullness of all the rest of the day. The space of indulgence, however, was always brief, nor were any private interviews betwixt him and Catherine permitted, or even possible. Whether it were some special precaution respecting the Queen's household, or whether it were her general ideas of propriety, Dame Fleming seemed particularly attentive to prevent the young people from holding any separate correspondence together, and bestowed, for Catherine's sole benefit

in this matter, the full stock of prudence and experience which she had acquired, when mother of the Queen's maidens of honour, and by which she had gained their hearty hatred. Casual meetings, however, could not be prevented, unless Catherine had been more desirous of shunning, or Roland Græme less anxious in watching for them. A smile, a gibe, a sarcasm, disarmed of its severity by the arch look with which it was accompanied, was all that time permitted to pass between them on such occasions. But such passing interviews neither afforded means nor opportunity to renew the discussion of the circumstances attending their earlier acquaintance, nor to permit Roland to investigate more accurately the mysterious apparition of the page in the purple velvet cloak at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

The winter months slipped heavily away, and spring was already advanced, when Roland Græme observed a gradual change in the manners of his fellow-prisoners. Having no business of his own to attend to, and being, like those of his age, education, and degree, sufficiently curious concerning what passed around, he began by degrees to suspect, and finally to be convinced, that there was something in agitation among his companions in captivity, to which they did not desire that he should be privy. Nay, he became almost certain that, by some means unintelligible to him, Queen Mary held correspondence beyond the walls and waters which surrounded her prison-house, and that she nourished some secret hope of deliverance or escape. In the conversations betwixt her and her attendants, at which he was necessarily present, the Queen could not always avoid showing that she was acquainted with the events which were passing abroad in the world, and which he only heard through her report. He observed that she wrote more and worked less than had been her former custom, and that, as it desired to lull suspicion asleep, she changed her manner towards the Lady Lochleven into one more gracious, and which seemed to express a resigned submission to her lot. "They think I am blind," he said to himself, "and that I am unfit to be trusted because I am so young, or it may be because I was sent hither by the Regent. Well! — be it so — they may be glad to confide in me in the long run; and Catherine Seyton, for as saucy as she is, may find me as safe a confidant as that sullen Douglas, whom she is always running after. It may be they are angry with me for listening to Master Elias Henderson; but it was their own fault for sending me there; and if the man speaks truth and good sense, and preaches only the word of God, he is as likely to be right as either Pope or Council."

It is probable that in this last conjecture, Roland Græme had hit upon the real cause why the ladies had not intrusted him with their counsels. He had of late had several conferences with Henderson on the subject of religion, and had given him to understand that he stood in need of his instructions, although he had not thought there was either prudence or necessity for confessing that hitherto he had held the tenets of the Church of Rome.

Elias Henderson, a keen propagator of the reformed faith, had sought the seclusion of Lochleven Castle, with the express purpose and expectation of making converts from Rome amongst the domestics of the dethroned Queen, and confirming the faith of those who already held the Protestant doctrines. Perhaps his hopes soared a little higher, and he

might nourish some expectation of a proselyte more distinguished in the person of the deposed Queen. But the pertinacity with which she and her female attendants refused to see or listen to him, rendered such hope, if he nourished it, altogether abortive.

The opportunity, therefore, of enlarging the religious information of Roland Græme, and bringing him to a more due sense of his duties to Heaven, was hailed by the good man as a door opened by Providence for the salvation of a sinner. He dreamed not, indeed, that he was converting a Papist, but such was the ignorance which Roland displayed upon some material points of the reformed doctrine, that Master Henderson, while praising his docility to the Lady Lochleven and her grandson, seldom failed to add, that his venerable brother, Henry Warden, must be now decayed in strength and in mind, since he found a catechumen of his flock so ill-grounded in the principles of his belief. For this, indeed, Roland Græme thought it was unnecessary to assign the true reason, which was his having made it a point of honour to forget all that Henry Warden taught him, as soon as he was no longer compelled to repeat it over as a lesson acquired by rote. The lessons of his new instructor, if not more impressively delivered, were received by a more willing ear, and a more awakened understanding, and the solitude of Lochleven Castle was favourable to graver thoughts than the page had hitherto entertained. He wavered yet, indeed, as one who was almost persuaded; but his attention to the chaplain's instructions procured him favour even with the stern old dame herself; and he was once or twice, but under great precaution, permitted to go to the neighbouring village of Kinross, situated on the mainland, to execute some ordinary commission of his unfortunate mistress.

For some time Roland Græme might be considered as standing neuter betwixt the two parties who inhabited the water-girdled Tower of Lochleven; but, as he rose in the opinion of the Lady of the Castle and her chaplain, he perceived, with great grief, that he lost ground in that of Mary and her female allies.

He came gradually to be sensible that he was regarded as a spy upon their discourse, and that, instead of the ease with which they had formerly conversed in his presence, without suppressing any of the natural feelings of anger, of sorrow, or mirth, which the chance topic of the moment happened to call forth, their talk was now guardedly restricted to the most indifferent subjects, and a studied reserve observed even in their mode of treating these. This obvious war of conscience was accompanied with a correspondent change in their personal demeanour towards the unfortunate page. The Queen, who had at first treated him with marked courtesy, now scarce spoke to him, save to convey some necessary command for her service. The Lady Fleming restricted her notice to the most dry and distant expressions of civility, and Catherine Seyton became bitter in her pleasantries, and shy, cross, and pettish in any intercourse they had together. What was yet more provoking, he saw, or thought he saw, marks of intelligence betwixt George Douglas and the beautiful Catherine Seyton; and, sharpened by jealousy, he wrought himself almost into a certainty, that the looks which they exchanged, conveyed matters of deep and serious import. "No wonder," he thought, "if, courted by

the son of a proud and powerful baron, she can no longer spare a word or look to the poor fortuneless page."

In a word, Roland Græme's situation became truly disagreeable, and his heart naturally enough rebelled against the injustice of this treatment, which deprived him of the only comfort which he had received for submitting to a confinement in other respects irksome. He accused Queen Mary and Catherine Seyton (for concerning the opinion of Dame Fleming he was indifferent) of inconsistency in being displeased with him on account of the natural consequences of an order of their own. Why did they send him to hear this overpowering preacher? The Abbot Ambrosius, he recollected, understood the weakness of their Popish cause better, when he enjoined him to repeat within his own mind, *aves*, and *oratio*, and *pater*, all the while old Henry Warden preached or lectured, that so he might secure himself against lending even a momentary ear to his heretical doctrine. "But I will endure this life no longer," said he to himself, manfully; "do they suppose I would betray my mistress, because I see cause to doubt of her religion?—that would be a serving, as they say, the devil for God's sake. I will forth into the world—he that serves fair ladies, may at least expect kind looks and kind words; and I bear not the mind of a gentleman, to submit to cold treatment and suspicion, and a life-long captivity besides. I will speak to George Douglas to-morrow when we go out a-fishing."

A sleepless night was spent in agitating this magnanimous resolution, and he rose in the morning not perfectly decided in his own mind whether he should abide by it or not. It happened that he was summoned by the Queen at an unusual hour, and just as he was about to go out with George Douglas. He went to attend her commands in the garden; but as he had his angling-rod in his hand, the circumstance announced his previous intention, and the Queen, turning to the Lady Fleming, said, "Catherine must devise some other amusement for us, *ma bonne amie*; our discreet page has already made his party for the day's pleasure."

"I said from the beginning," answered the Lady Fleming, "that your Grace ought not to rely on being favoured with the company of a youth who has so many Huguenot acquaintances, and has the means of amusing himself far more agreeably than with us."

"I wish," said Catherine, her animated features reddening with mortification, "that his friends would sail away with him for good, and bring us in return a page (if such a thing can be found) faithful to his Queen and to his religion."

"One part of your wishes may be granted, madam," said Roland Græme, unable any longer to restrain his sense of the treatment which he received on all sides; and he was about to add, "I heartily wish you a companion in my room, if such can be found, who is capable of enduring women's caprices without going distracted." Luckily, he recollected the remorse which he had felt at having given way to the vivacity of his temper upon a similar occasion; and, closing his lips, imprisoned, until it died on his tongue, a reproach so misbecoming the presence of majesty.

"Why do you remain there," said the Queen, "as if you were rooted to the parterre?"

"I but attend your Grace's commands," said the page.

"I have none to give you — Begone, sir!" As he left the garden to go to the boat, he distinctly heard Mary upbraid one of her attendants in these words:—"You see to what you have exposed us!"

This brief scene at once determined Roland Græme's resolution to quit the castle, if it were possible, and to impart his resolution to George Douglas without loss of time. That gentleman, in his usual mood of silence, sat in the stern of the little skiff which they used on such occasions, trimming his fishing-tackle, and, from time to time, indicating by signs to Græme, who pulled the oars, which way he should row. When they were a furlong or two from the castle, Roland rested on the oars, and addressed his companion somewhat abruptly,—"I have something of importance to say to you, under your pleasure, fair sir."

The pensive melancholy of Douglas's countenance at once gave way to the eager, keen, and startled look of one who expects to hear something of deep and alarming import.

"I am wearied to the very death of this Castle of Lochleven," continued Roland.

"Is that all?" said Douglas; "I know none of its inhabitants who are much better pleased with it."

"Ay, but I am neither a native of the house, nor a prisoner in it, and so I may reasonably desire to leave it."

"You might desire to quit it with equal reason," answered Douglas, "if you were both the one and the other."

"But," said Roland Græme, "I am not only tired of living in Lochleven Castle, but I am determined to quit it."

"That is a resolution more easily taken than executed," replied Douglas.

"Not if yourself, sir, and your Lady Mother, choose to consent," answered the page.

"You mistake the matter, Roland," said Douglas; "you will find that the consent of two other persons is equally essential — that of the Lady Mary your mistress, and that of my uncle the Regent, who placed you about her person, and who will not think it proper that she should change her attendants so soon."

"And must I then remain whether I will or no?" demanded the page, somewhat appalled at a view of the subject, which would have occurred sooner to a person of more experience.

"At least," said George Douglas, "you must will to remain till my uncle consents to dismiss you."

"Frankly," said the page, "and speaking to you as a gentleman who is incapable of betraying me, I will confess, that if I thought myself a prisoner here, neither walls nor water should confine me long."

"Frankly," said Douglas, "I could not much blame you for the attempt; yet, for all that, my father, or uncle, or the earl, or any of my brothers, or in short any of the king's lords into whose hands you fell, would in such a case hang you like a dog, or like a sentinel who deserts his post; and I promise you that you will hardly escape them. But row towards Saint Serf's island — there is a breeze from the west, and we shall have sport, keeping to

windward of the sale, where the ripple is strongest. We will speak more of what you have mentioned when we have had an hour's sport."

Their fishing was successful, though never did two anglers pursue even that silent and unsocial pleasure with less of verbal intercourse.

When their time was expired, Douglas took the oars in his turn, and by his order Roland Græme steered the boat, directing her course upon the landing-place at the castle. But he also stopped in the midst of his course, and, looking around him, said to Græme, "There is a thing which I could mention to thee; but it is so deep a secret, that even here, surrounded as we are by sea and sky, without the possibility of a listener, I cannot prevail on myself to speak it out."

"Better leave it unspoken, sir," answered Roland Græme, "if you doubt the honour of him who alone can hear it."

"I doubt not your honour," replied George Douglas; "but you are young, imprudent, and changeful."

"Young," said Roland, "I am, and it may be imprudent — but who hath informed you that I am changeful?"

"One that knows you, perhaps, better than you know yourself," replied Douglas.

"I suppose you mean Catherine Seyton," said the page, his heart rising as he spoke; "but she is herself fifty times more variable in her humour than the very water which we are floating upon."

"My young acquaintance," said Douglas, "I pray you to remember that Catherine Seyton is a lady of blood and birth, and must not be lightly spoken of."

"Master George of Douglas," said Græme, "as that speech seemed to be made under the warrant of something like a threat, I pray you to observe, that I value not the threat at the estimation of a fin of one of these dead trouts; and, moreover, I would have you to know that the champion who undertakes the defence of every lady of blood and birth, whom men accuse of change of faith and of fashion, is like to have enough of work on his hands."

"Go to," said the Seneschal, but in a tone of good-humour, "thou art a foolish boy, unfit to deal with any matter more serious than the casting of a net, or the flying of a hawk."

"If your secret concern Catherine Seyton," said the page, "I care not for it, and so you may tell her if you will. I wot she can shape you opportunity to speak with her, as she has ere now."

The fifth which passed over Douglas's face, made the page aware that he had alighted on a truth, when he was, in fact, speaking at random; and the feeling that he had done so, was like striking a dagger into his own heart. His companion, without farther answer, resumed the oars, and pulled lustily till they arrived at the island and the castle. The servants received the produce of their spoil, and the two fishers, turning from each other in silence, went each to his several apartment.

Roland Græme had spent about an hour in grumbling against Catherine Seyton, the Queen, the Regent, and the whole House of Lochleven, with George Douglas at the head of it, when the time approached that his duty called him to attend the meal of Queen Mary. As he arranged his dress for this purpose, he grudged the trouble, which, on similar occasions, he used, with boyish

foppery, to consider as one of the most important duties of his day; and when he went to take his place behind the chair of the Queen, it was with an air of offended dignity, which could not escape her observation, and probably appeared to her ridiculous enough, for she whispered something in French to her ladies, at which the Lady Fleming laughed, and Catherine appeared half diverted and half disconcerted. This pleasantry, of which the subject was concealed from him, the unfortunate page received, of course, as a new offence, and called an additional degree of sullen dignity into his mind, which might have exposed him to farther railery, but that Mary appeared disposed to make allowance for and compassionate his feelings.

With the peculiar tact and delicacy which no woman possessed in greater perfection, she began to soothe by degrees the vexed spirit of her magnanimous attendant. The excellence of the fish which he had taken in his expedition, the high flavour and beautiful red colour of the trouts, which have long given distinction to the lake, led her first to express her thanks to her attendant for so agreeable an addition to her table, especially upon a *jour de jeûne*; and then brought on equivoques into the place where the fish had been taken, their size, their peculiarities, the times when they were in season, and a comparison between the Lochleven trouts and those which are found in the lakes and rivers of the south of Scotland. The ill humour of Roland Graeme was never of an obstinate character. It rolled away like mist before the sun, and he was easily engaged in a keen and animated dissertation about Lochleven trout, and sea trout, and river trout, and bull trout, and char, which never rise to a fly, and par, which some suppose infant salmon, and *herlings*, which frequent the Nith, and *wendisses*, which are only found in the Castle-Loch of Lochmaben; and he was hurrying on with the eager impetuosity and enthusiasm of a young sportsman, when he observed that the smile with which the Queen at first listened to him died languidly away, and that, in spite of her efforts to suppress them, tears rose to her eyes. He stopped suddenly short, and, distressed in his turn, asked, "If he had had the misfortune unwittingly to give displeasure to her Grace?"

"No, my poor boy," replied the Queen; "but as you numbered up the lakes and rivers of my kingdom, imagination cheated me, as it will do, and snatched me from these dreary walls away to the romantic streams of Nithdale, and the royal towers of Lochmaben.—O land, which my fathers have so long ruled! of the pleasures which you extend so freely, your Queen is now deprived, and the poorest beggar, who may wander free from one landward town to another, would seem to change fates with Mary of Scotland!"

"Your Highness," said the Lady Fleming, "will do well to withdraw."

"Come with me then, Fleming," said the Queen, "I would not burden hearts so young as these are, with the sight of my sorrows."

She accompanied these words with a look of melancholy compassion towards Roland and Catherine, who were now left alone together in the apartment.

The page found his situation not a little embarrassing; for, as every reader has experienced who may have chanced to be in such a situation, it is

extremely difficult to maintain the full dignity of an offended person in the presence of a beautiful girl, whatever reason we may have for being angry with her. Catherine Seyton, on her part, sat still like a lingering ghost, which, conscious of the awe which its presence imposes, is charitably disposed to give the poor confused mortal whom it visits, time to recover his senses, and comply with the grand rule of demonology by speaking first. But as Roland seemed in no hurry to avail himself of her condescension, she carried it a step farther, and herself opened the conversation.

"I pray you, fair sir, if it may be permitted me to disturb your august reverie by a question so simple,—what may have become of your rosary?"

"It is lost, madam—lost some time since," said Roland, partly embarrassed and partly indignant.

"And may I ask farther, sir," said Catherine, "why you have not replaced it with another?—I have half a mind," she said, taking from her pocket a string of ebony beads adorned with gold, "to bestow one upon you, to keep for my sake, just to remind you of former acquaintance."

There was a little tremulous accent in the tone with which these words were delivered, which at once put to flight Roland Graeme's resentment, and brought him to Catherine's side; but she instantly resumed the bold and firm accent which was more familiar to her. "I did not bid you," she said, "come and sit so close by me; for the acquaintance that I spoke of, has been stiff and cold, dead and buried, for this many a day."

"Now Heaven forbid!" said the page, "it has only slept; and now that you desire it should awake, fair Catherine, believe me that a pledge of your returning favour—"

"Nay, nay," said Catherine, withholding the rosary, towards which, as he spoke, he extended his hand, "I have changed my mind on better reflection. What should a heretic do with these holy beads, that have been blessed by the Father of the church himself?"

Roland winced grievously, for he saw plainly which way the discourse was now likely to tend, and felt that it must at all events be embarrassing. "Nay, but," he said, "it was as a token of your own regard that you offered them."

"Ay, fair sir, but that regard attended the faithful subject, the loyal and pious Catholic, the individual who was so solemnly devoted at the same time with myself to the same grand duty; which, you must now understand, was to serve the church and Queen. To such a person, if you ever heard of him, was my regard due, and not to him who associates with heretics, and is about to become a renegade."

"I should scarce believe, fair 'mistress,' said Roland, indignantly, "that the fane of your favour turned only to a Catholic wind, considering that it points so plainly to George Douglas, who, I think, is both kingman and Protestant."

"Think better of George Douglas," said Catherine, "than to believe—"; and then checking herself, as if she had spoken too much, she went on, "I assure you, fair Master Roland, that all who wish you well are sorry for you."

"Their number is very few, I believe," answered Roland, "and their sorrow, if they say any, not deeper than ten minutes' time will cure."

"They are more numerous, and think more

deeply concerning you, than you seem to be aware," answered Catherine. "But perhaps they think wrong—You are the best judge in your own affairs; and if you prefer gold and church-lands to honour and loyalty, and the faith of your fathers, why should you be hampered in conscience more than others?"

"May Heaven bear witness for me," said Roland, "that if I entertain any difference of opinion—that is, if I nourish any doubts in point of religion, they have been adopted on the conviction of my own mind, and the suggestion of my own conscience!"

"Ay ay, your conscience—your conscience!" repeated she with satiric emphasis; "your conscience is the scape-goat; I warrant it an able one—it will bear the burden of one of the best manors of the Abbey of Saint Mary of Konnaquhair, lately forfeited to our noble Lord the King, by the Abbot and community thereof, for the high crime of fidelity to their religious vows, and now to be granted by the High and Mighty Traitor, and so forth, James Earl of Murray, to the good squire of James Roland Gramme, for his loyal and faithful service as under-espial, and deputy-turnkey, for securing the person of his lawful sovereign, Queen Mary."

"You misconstrue me cruelly," said the page; "yes, Catherine, most cruelly—God knows I would protect this poor lady at the risk of my life, or with my life; but what can I do—what can any one do for her?"

"Much may be done—enough may be done—all may be done—if men will be but true and honourable, as Scottish men were in the days of Bruce and Wallace. Oh, Roland, from what an enterprise you are now withdrawing your heart and hand, through mere fickleness and coldness of spirit!"

"How can I withdraw," said Roland, "from an enterprise which has never been communicated to me!—Has the Queen, or have you, or has any one, communicated with me upon any thing for her service which I have refused? Or have you not, all of you, held me at such distance from your counsels, as if I were the most faithless spy since the days of Ganelon?"

"And who," said Catherine Seyton, "would trust the sworn friend, and pupil, and companion, of the heretic preacher Henderson? ay—a proper tutor you have chosen, instead of the excellent Ambrosius, who is now turned out of house and home—stead, if indeed he is not languishing in a dungeon, for withstanding the tyranny of Morton, to whose brother the temporalities of that noble house of God have been gifted away by the Regent."

"Is it possible?" said the page; "and is the excellent Father Ambrose in such distress?"

"He would account the news of your falling away from the faith of your fathers," answered Catherine, "a worse mishap than aught that tyranny can inflict on himself."

"But why," said Roland, very much moved, "why should you suppose that—that—that it is with me as you say?"

"Do you yourself deny it?" replied Catherine;

"do you not admit that you have drunk the poison which you should have dashed from your lips!—Do you deny that it now ferments in your veins, if it has not altogether corrupted the springs of life!—Do you deny that you have your doubts, as you proudly term them, respecting what popes and councils have declared it unlawful to doubt of?—Is not your faith wavering, if not overthrown!—Does not the heretic preacher boast his conquest!—Does not the heretic woman of this prison-house hold up thy example to others!—Do not the Queen and the Lady Fleming believe in thy falling away!—And is there any except one—yes I will speak it out, and think as lightly as you please of my good-will—is there one except myself that holds even a lingering hope that you may yet prove what we once all believed of you?"

"I know not," said our poor page, much embarrassed by the view which was thus presented to him of the conduct he was expected to pursue, and by a person in whom he was not the less interested that so long a residence in Muchloven Castle, with no object so likely to attract his undivided attention, had taken place since they had first met,— "I know not what you expect of me, or fear from me." "I was sent hither to attend Queen Mary, and to her I acknowledge the duty of a servant through life and death. If any one had expected service of another kind, I was not the party to render it. I neither avow nor disclaim the doctrines of the reformed church.—Will you have the truth?—It seems to me that the profligacy of the Catholic clergy has brought this judgment on their own heads, and, for aught I know, it may be for their reformation. But, for betraying this unhappy Queen, God knows I am guiltless of the thought. Did I even believe worse of her, than as her servant I wish—of her subject, I dare to do—I would not betray her—far from it—I would aid her in aught which could tend to a fair trial of her cause."

"Enough! enough!" answered Catherine, clasping her hands together; "then thou wilt not desert us if any means are presented, by which, placing our Royal Mistress at freedom, this case may be honestly tried betwixt her and her rebellious subjects?"

"Nay—but, fair Catherine," replied the page, "hear but what the Lord of Murray said when he sent me hither."

"Fear but what the devil said," replied the maiden, "rather than what a false subject, a false brother, a false counsellor, a false friend, said! A man raised from a petty pensioner on the crown's bounty, to be the counsellor of majesty, and the prime distributor of the bounties of the state;—one with whom rank, fortune, title, consequence, and power, all grew up like a mushroom, by the mere warm good-will of the sister, whom, in requital, he hath mewed up in this place of melancholy seclusion—whom, in farther requital, he has deposed, and whom, if he dared, he would murder!"

"I think not so ill of the Earl of Murray," said Roland Gramme; "and sooth to speak," he added, with a smile, "it would require some bribe to make me embrace, with firm and desperate resolution, either one side or the other."

"Nay, if that is all," replied Catherine Seyton, in a tone of enthusiasm, "you shall be guarded

A. RAN, GAN, or Ganelon of Mayence, is, in the Romance, the subject of Charlemagne and his Paladins, always represented, as the Editor by whom the Christian champions are betrayed.

with prayers from oppressed subjects—from dispossessed clergy—from insulted nobles—with immortal praise by future ages—with eager gratitude by the present—with fame on earth, and with felicity in heaven! Your country will thank you—your Queen will be debtor to you—you will achieve at once the highest from the lowest degree in chivalry—all men will honour, all women will love you—and I, sworn with you so early to the accomplishment of Queen Mary's freedom, will—yes I will, love you better than—ever sister loved brother!"

"Shy on—say on!" whispered Roland, kneeling on one knee, and taking her hand, which, in the warmth of exhortation, Catherine held towards him.

"Nay," said she, pausing, "I have already said too much—far too much, if I prevail not with you—far too little if I do. But I prevail," she continued, seeing that the countenance of the youth she addressed returned the enthusiasm of her own—"I prevail; or rather the good cause prevails through its own strength—thus I devote thee to it." And as she spoke she approached her finger to the brow of the astonished youth, and without touching it, signed the cross over his forehead—stooped her face towards him, and seemed to kiss the empty space in which she had traced the symbol; then starting up, and extricating herself from his grasp, darted into the Queen's apartment.

Roland Græme remained as the enthusiastic maiden had left him, kneeling on one knee, with breath withheld, and with eyes fixed upon the space which the fairy form of Catherine Seyton had so lately occupied. If his thoughts were not of unmixed delight, they at least partook of that thrilling and intoxicating, though mingled sense of pain and pleasure, the most overpowering which life offers in its blended cup. He rose and retired slowly; and although the chaplain Mr Henderson preached on that evening his best sermon against the errors of Popery, I would not engage that he was followed accurately through the train of his reasoning by the young proselyte, with a view to whose especial benefit he had handled the subject.

CHAPTER XXV.

And when Love's torch hath set the heart in flame,
Comes Belmor's counsel, with his awe and cautions,
Giving such aid as the old gray-beard Nestor,
Who from the church-yard drags his crazy engine,
To ply its dribbling intellectual streamlet
Against a conflagration.

Old Play.

In a musing mood, Roland Græme upon the ensuing morning betook himself to the battlements of the castle, as a spot where he might indulge the course of his thick-coming fancies with least chance of interruption. But his place of retirement was in the present case ill-chosen, for he was presently joined by Mr Elias Henderson.

"I sought you, young man," said the preacher, "having to speak of something which concerns you nearly."

The page had the pretence for avoiding the conference which the chaplain thus offered, though he felt that it might prove an embarrassing one.

"In teaching thee, as far as my feeble knowledge

hath permitted, thy duty towards God," said the chaplain, "there are particulars of your duty towards man, upon which I was unwilling long or much to insist. You are here in the service of a lady, honourable as touching her birth, deserving of all compassion as respects her misfortunes, and garnished with even but too many of those outward qualities which win men's regard and affection. Have you ever considered your regard to this Lady Mary of Scotland, in its true light and bearing?"

"I trust, reverend sir," replied Roland Græme, "that I am well aware of the duties a servant is my condition owes to his royal mistress, especially in her lowly and distressed condition."

"True," answered the preacher; "but it is even that honest feeling which may, in the Lady Mary's case, carry thee into great crime and treachery."

"How so, reverend sir?" replied the page; "I profess I understand you not."

"I speak to you not of the crimes of this ill-advised lady," said the preacher; "they are not subjects for the ears of her sworn servant. But it is enough to say, that this unhappy person hath rejected more offers of grace, more hopes of glory, than ever were held out to earthly princes; and that she is now, her day of favour being passed, sequestered in this lonely castle, for the common weal of the people of Scotland, and it may be for the benefit of her own soul."

"Reverend sir," said Roland, somewhat impatiently, "I am but too well aware that my unfortunate mistress is imprisoned, since I have the misfortune to share in her restraint myself—of which, to speak sooth, I am heartily weary."

"It is even of that which I am about to speak," said the chaplain, mildly; "but first, my good Roland, look forth on the pleasant prospect of yonder cultivated plain. You see, where the smoke arises, yonder village standing half hidden by the trees, and you know it to be the dwelling-place of peace and industry. From space to space, each by the side of its own stream, you see the gray towers of barons, with cottages interspersed; and you know that they also, with their household, are now living in unity; the lance hung upon the wall, and the sword resting in its sheath. You see, too, more than one fair church, where the pure waters of life are offered to the thirsty, and where the hungry are refreshed with spiritual food.—What would he deserve, who should bring fire and slaughter into so fair and happy a scene—who should bare the swords of the gentry and turn them against each other—who should give tower and cottage to the flames, and shake the embers with the blood of the indwellers!—What would he deserve who should lift up again that ancient Dragon of Superstition, whom the worthies of the time have beaten down, and who should once more make the churches of God the high places of Baal?"

"You have limned a frightful picture, reverend sir," said Roland Græme; "yes I guess not whom you would charge with the purpose of effecting a change so horrible."

"God forbid," replied the preacher, "that I should say so thee, Thou art the man.—Yet beware, Roland Græme; that thou, in serving thy mistress, hold fast the still higher service which thou owest to the peace of thy country, and the prosperity of her inhabitants; else, Roland Græme,

thou mayst be the very man upon whose head will fall the curses and assured punishment due to such work. If thou art won by the song of these strains to aid that unhappy lady's escape from this place of penitence and security, it is over with the peace of Scotland's cottages, and with the prosperity of her palaces—and the babe unborn shall curse the name of the man who gave inlet to the disorder which will follow the war betwixt the mother and the son."

"I know of no such plan, reverend sir," answered the page, "and therefore can aid none—*enfin*.—My duty towards the Queen has been simply that of an attendant; it is a task of which, at times, I would willingly have been freed; nevertheless—"

"It is to prepare thee for the enjoyment of something more of liberty," said the preacher, "that I have endeavoured to impress upon you the deep responsibility under which your office must be discharged. George Douglas hath told the Lady Lochleven that you are weary of this service, and my intercession hath partly determined her good ladyship, that, as your discharge cannot be granted, you shall, instead, be employed in certain commissions on the mainland, which have hitherto been discharged by other persons of confidence. Wherefore, come with me to the lady, for even to-day such duty will be imposed on you."

"I trust you will hold me excused, reverend sir," said the page, who felt that an increase of confidence on the part of the Lady of the Castle and her family would render his situation in a moral view doubly embarrassing, "one cannot serve two masters—and I much fear that my mistress will not hold me excused for taking employment under another."

"Fear not that," said the preacher; "her consent shall be asked and obtained. I fear she will yield if but too easily, as hoping to avail herself of your agency to maintain correspondence with her friends, as these falsely call themselves, who would make her name the watchword for civil war."

"And thus," said the page, "I shall be exposed to suspicion on all sides; for my mistress will consider me as a spy placed on her by her enemies, seeing me so far trusted by them; and the Lady Lochleven will never cease to suspect the possibility of my betraying her, because circumstances put it into my power to do so—I would rather remain as I am."

There followed a pause of one or two minutes, during which Henderson looked steadily in Roland's countenance, as if desirous to ascertain whether there was not more in the answer than the precise words seemed to imply. He failed in this point, however; for Roland, bred a page from childhood, knew how to assume a sullen pettish cast of countenance, well enough calculated to hide all internal emotions.

"I understand thee not, Roland," said the preacher, "or rather thou thinkest on this matter more deeply than I apprehended to be in thy nature. Methought, the delight of going on shore with thy bow, or thy gun, or thy angling-rod, would have borne away all other feelings."

"And so it would," replied Roland, who perceived the danger of suffering Henderson's half-raised suspicions to become fully awake,—"I would have thought of nothing but the gun and the sea, and the wild water-fowl that tempt me by

sailing among the sedges yonder so far out or flight-shot, had you not spoken of my going on shore as what was to occasion burning of town and tower, the downfall of the evangelists, and the upsetting of the mast."

"Follow me, then," said Henderson, "and we will seek the Lady Lochleven."

They found her at breakfast with her grandson George Douglas.—"Peace be with your ladyship!" said the preacher, bowing to his patroness; "Roland Grames awaits your order."

"Young man," said the lady, "our chaplain hath warranted for thy fidelity, and we are determined to give you certain errands to do for us in our towns of Kinross."

"Not by my advice," said Douglas, coldly.

"I said not that it was," answered the lady, something sharply. "The mother of thy father may, I should think, be old enough to judge for herself in a matter so simple.—Thou wilt take the skiff, Roland, and two of my people, whom Dryfesdale or Randal will order out, and fetch off certain stuff of plate and hangings, which should last night be lodged at Kinross by the wains from Edinburgh."

"And give this packet," said George Douglas, "to a servant of ours, whom you will find in waiting there.—It is the report to my father," he added, looking towards his grandmother, who acquiesced by bending her head.

"I have already mentioned to Master Henderson," said Roland Grames, "that, as my duty requires my attendance on the Queen, her Grace's permission for my journey ought to be obtained before I can undertake your commission."

"Look to it, my son," said the old lady, "the scruple of the youth is honourable."

"Craving your pardon, madam, I have no wish to force myself on her presence thus early," said Douglas, in an indifferent tone; "it might displease her, and were no way agreeable to me."

"And I," said the Lady Lochleven, "although her temper hath been more gentle of late, have no will to undergo, without necessity, the rancour of her wit."

"Under your permission, madam," said the chaplain, "I will myself render your request to the Queen. During my long residence in this house she hath not deigned to see me in private, or to hear my doctrine; yet so may Heaven prosper my labours, as love for her soul, and desire to bring her into the right path, was my chief desire for coming hither."

"Take care, Master Henderson," said Douglas, in a tone which seemed almost sarcastic, "lest you rush hastily on an adventure to which you have no vocation—you are learned, and know the adage, *Ne accesseris in consilium nisi vocatus*.—Who hath required this at your hand?"

"The Master to whose service I am called," answered the preacher, looking upward,—"He who hath commanded me to be earnest in season and out of season."

"Your acquaintance hath not been much, I think, with counts or princes," continued the young Esquire.

"No, sir," replied Henderson, "but, like my Master, Knox, I see nothing frightful in the fair face of a pretty lady."

"My son," said the Lady of Lochleven, "quench

not the good man's seal — let him do the errand to this unhappy Princess."

"With more willingness than I would do it myself," said George Douglas. Yet something in his manner appeared to contradict his words.

The minister went accordingly, followed by Roland Graeme, and, demanding an audience of the imprisoned Princess, was admitted. He found her with her ladies engaged in the daily task of embroidery. The Queen received him with that courtesy, which, in ordinary cases, she used towards all who approached her, and the clergyman, in opening his commission, was obviously somewhat more embarrassed than he had expected to be. — "The good Lady of Lochleven — may it please your Grace —"

He made a short pause, during which Mary said, with a smile "My Grace would, in truth, be well pleased, were the Lady Lochleven our good lady — But go on — what is the will of the good Lady of Lochleven?"

"She desires, madam," said the chaplain, "that your Grace will permit, this young gentleman, your page, Roland Graeme, to pass to Kinross, to look after some household stuff and hangings, sent hither for the better furnishing your Grace's apartments."

"The Lady of Lochleven," said the Queen, "uses needless ceremony, in requesting our permission for that which stands within her own pleasure. We well know that this young gentleman's attendance on us had not been so long permitted, were he not thought to be more at the command of that good lady than at ours. — But we cheerfully yield consent that he shall go on her errand — with our will we would doom no living creature to the captivity which we ourselves must suffer."

"Ay, madam," answered the preacher, "and it is doubtless natural for humanity to quarrel with its prison-house. Yet there have been those, who have found, that time spent in the house of temporal captivity may be so employed as to redeem us from spiritual slavery."

"I apprehend your meaning, sir," replied the Queen, "but I have heard your apostle — I have heard, Master John Knox; and were I to be perverted, I would willingly resign to the ablest and most powerful of heresiarchs, the poor honour he might acquire by overcoming my faith and my hope."

"Madam," said the preacher, "it is not to the talents or skill of the husbandman that God gives the increase — the words which were offered in vain by him whom you justly call our apostle, during the bustle and gaiety of a court, may yet find better acceptance during the leisure for reflection which this place affords. God knows, lady, that I speak in singleness of heart, as one who would as soon compare himself to the immortal angels, as to the holy man whom you have named. Yet would you but condescend to apply to their noblest use, those talents and that learning which all allow you to be possessed of — would you afford us but the slightest hope that you would hear and regard what can be urged against the blinded superstition and idolatry in which you are brought up, sure am I, that the most powerfully-gifted of my brethren, that even John Knox himself, would hasten hither, and account the rescue of your single soul from the nets of Romish error —"

"I am obliged to you and to them for their charity," said Mary; "but as I have at present but one presence-chamber, I would reluctantly see it converted into a Huguenot synod."

"At least, madam, be not thus obstinately blinded in your errors! Hear one who has hungered and thirsted, watched and prayed, to undertake the good work of your conversion, and who would be content to die the instant that a week so advantageous for yourself and so beneficial to Scotland were accomplished — Yes, lady, could I but shake the remaining pillar of the heathen temple in this land — and that permit me to term your faith in the delusions of Rome — I could be content to die overwhelmed in the ruins!"

"I will not insult your zeal, sir," replied Mary, "by saying you are more likely to make sport for the Philistines than to overwhelm them — your charity claims my thanks, for it is warmly expressed and may be truly pursued — But believe as well of me as I am willing to do of you, and think that I may be as anxious to recall you to the ancient and only road, as you are to teach me your new by-ways to paradise."

"Then, madam, if such be your generous purpose," said Henderson, eagerly, "what hinders that we should dedicate some part of that time, unhappily now too much at your Grace's disposal, to discuss a question so weighty! You, by report of all men, are both learned and witty; and I, though without such advantages, am strong in my cause as in a tower of defence. Why should we not spend some space in endeavouring to discover which of us hath the wrong side in this important matter?"

"Nay," said Queen Mary, "I never alleged my force was strong enough to accept of a combat *en champ clos*, with a scholar and a polemic. Besides, the match is not equal. You, sir, might retire when you felt the battle go against you, while I am tied to the stake, and have no permission to say the debate wearies me. — I would be alone."

She curtsied low to him as she uttered these words; and Henderson, whose zeal was indeed ardent, but did not extend to the neglect of delicacy, bowed in return, and prepared to withdraw.

"I would," he said, "that my earnest wish, my most zealous prayer, could procure to you Grace any blessing or comfort, but especially that in which alone blessing or comfort is, as easily as the slightest intimation of your wish will remove me from your presence."

He was in the act of departing, when Mary said to him with much courtesy, "Do me no injury in your thoughts, good sir; it may be, that if my time here be protracted longer — as surely I hope it will not, trusting that either my rebel subjects will repent of their disloyalty, or that my faithful lieges will obtain the upper hand — but if my time be here protracted, it may be I shall have no displeasure in hearing one who seems so reasonable and compassionate as yourself, and I may hazard your contempt by endeavouring to recollect and repeat the reasons which schoolmen and councils give for the faith that is in me, — although I fear that God help me! my Latin has deserted me with my other possessions. This must, however, be for another day. Meanwhile, sir, let the Lady of Lochleven employ my page as she lists — I will not afford suspicion by speaking a word to him before

he goes. — Roland Grame, my friend, lose not an opportunity of amusing thyself — dance, sing, run, and leap — all may be done merrily on the mainland; but he must have more than quicksilver in his veins who would frolic here."

"Alas! madam," said the preacher, "to what is it you exhort the youth, while time passes, and eternity summons? Can our salvation be insured by idle mirth, or our good work wrought out without fear and trembling?"

"I cannot fear or tremble," replied the Queen; "to Mary Stewart such emotions are unknown. But if weeping and sorrow on my part will atone for the boy's enjoying an hour of boyish pleasure, be assured the penance shall be duly paid."

"Nay, but, gracious lady," said the preacher, "in this you greatly err; — our tears and our sorrows are all too little for our own faults and follies, nor can we transfer them, as your church falsely teaches, to the benefit of others."

"May I pray you, sir," answered the Queen, "with as little offence as such a prayer may import, to transfer yourself elsewhere! We are sick at heart, and may not now be disturbed with farther controversy — and thou, Roland, take this little purse;" (then, turning to the divine, she said, shewing its contents,) "Look, reverend sir, — it contains only these two or three gold testoons, a coin which, though bearing my own poor features, I have ever found more active against me than on my side, just as my subjects take arms against me, with my own name for their summons and signal. — Take this purse, that thou mayest want no means of amusement. Fail not — fail not to bring me back news from Kinross, only let it be such as, without suspicion or offence, may be told in the presence of this reverend gentleman, or of the good Lady Lochleven herself."

The last hint was too irrealisable to be withstood; and Henderson withdrew, half mortified, half pleased, with his reception; for Mary, from long habit, and the address which was natural to her, had learned, in an extraordinary degree, the art of evading discourse which was disagreeable to her feelings or prejudices, without affronting those by whom it was proffered.

Roland Grame retired with the chaplain, at a signal from his lady; but it did not escape him, that as he left the room, stepping backwards, and making the deep obeisance due to royalty, Catherine Seyton held up her slender forefinger, with a gesture which he alone could witness, and which seemed to say, "Remember what has passed betwixt us."

The young page had now his last charge from the Lady of Lochleven. "There are revels," she said, "this day at the village — my son's authority is, as yet, unable to prevent these continued workings of the ancient devil of folly which the Romish priests have kneaded into the very souls of the Scottish peasantry. I do not command thee to abstain from them — that would be only to lay a snare for thy folly, or to teach thee falsehood; but enjoy these vanities with moderation, and mark them as something thou must soon learn to renounce and condemn. Our chamberlain at Kinross, Luke Lundie, — Doctor, as he foolishly calleth himself, — will acquaint thee what is to be done in the matter about which thou goest. Remember thou art trusted — shew thyself, therefore, worthy of trust."

When we recollect that Roland Grame was not yet nineteen, and that he had spent his whole life in the solitary Castle of Avenel, excepting the few hours he had passed in Edinburgh, and his late residence at Lochleven, (the latter period having very little served to enlarge his acquaintance with the gay world,) we cannot wonder that his heart beat high with hope and curiosity, at the prospect of partaking the sport even of a country wake. He hastened to his little cabin, and turned over the wardrobe with which (in every respect becoming his station) he had been supplied from Edinburgh, probably by order of the Earl of Murray. By the Queen's command he had hitherto waited upon her in mourning, or at least in sad-coloured raiment. Her condition, she said, admitted of nothing more gay. But now he selected the gayest dress his wardrobe afforded; composed of scarlet slashed with black satin, the royal colours of Scotland — combed his long curled hair — disposed his chain and medal round a beaver hat of the newest block; and with the gay falchion which had reached him in so mysterious a manner, hung by his side in an embroidered belt, his apparel added to his natural frank mien and handsome figure, formed a most commendable and pleasing specimen of the young gallant of the period. He sought to make his parting reverence to the Queen and her ladies, but old Dryfesdale hurried him to the boat.

"We will have no private audiences," he said, "my master; since you are to be trusted with somewhat, we will try at least to save thee from the temptation of opportunity. God help thee, child," he added, with a glance of contempt at his gay clothes, "an the bear-ward be yonder from Saint Andrews, have a care thou go not near him."

"And wherefore, I pray you?" said Roland.

"Least he take thee for one of his runaway jackanapes," answered the steward, smiling sourly. "I wear not my clothes at thy cost," said Roland indignantly.

"Nor at thine own either, my son," replied the steward, "else would thy garb more nearly resemble thy merit and thy station."

Roland Grame suppressed with difficulty the repartee which arose to his lips, and, wrapping his scarlet mantle around him, threw himself into the boat, which two rowers, themselves urged by curiosity to see the revels, pulled stoutly towards the west end of the lake. As they put off, Roland thought he could discover the face of Catherine Seyton, though carefully withdrawn from observation, peeping from a loophole to view his departure. He pulled off his hat, and held it up as a token that he saw and wished her adieu. A white kerchief waved for a second across the window, and for the rest of the little voyage, the thoughts of Catherine Seyton disputed ground in his breast with the expectations excited by the approaching revel. As they drew nearer and nearer the shore, the sounds of mirth and music, the laugh, the halloo, and the shout, came thicker upon the ear, and in a trice the boat was moored, and Roland Grame hastened in quest of the chamberlain, that, being informed what time he had at his own disposal, he might lay it out to the best advantage.

CHAPTER XXVII.

Room for the master of the ring, ye swains,
Divide your crowded ranks—before him march
The rural minstrelsy, the rattling drum,
The clamorous war-pipe, and far-echoing horn.
Rural Sports.—BONNEVILLE.

No long space intervened ere Roland Gzome was able to discover among the crowd of revellers, who gambolled upon the open space which extends betwixt the village and the lake, a person of so great importance as Doctor Luke Lundin, upon whom devolved officially the charge of representing the lord of the land, and who was attended for support of his authority by a piper, a drummer, and four sturdy clowns armed with rusty halberds, garnished with party-coloured ribbons, myrmidons who, early as the day was, had already broken more than one head in the awful names of the Laird of Lochleven and his chamberlain.

As soon as this dignitary was informed that the castle skiff had arrived, with a gallant, dressed like a lord's son at the least, who desired presently to speak to him, he adjusted his ruff and his black coat, turned round his girdle till the garnished hilt of his long rapier became visible, and walked with due solemnity towards the beach. Solemn indeed he was entitled to be, even on less important occasions, for he had been bred to the venerable study of medicine, as those acquainted with the science very soon discovered from the aphorisms which ornamented his discourse. His success had not been equal to his pretensions; but as he was a native of the neighbouring kingdom of Fife, and bore distant relation to, or dependance upon, the ancient family of Lundin of that ilk, who were bound in close friendship with the house of Lochleven, he had, through their interest, got planted comfortably enough in his present station upon the banks of that beautiful lake. The profits of his chamberlainship being moderate, especially in those unsettled times, he had eked it out a little with some practice in his original profession; and it was said that the inhabitants of the village and barony of Kinross were not more effectually thirled (which may be translated enthralled) to the baron's mill, than they were to the medical monopoly of the chamberlain. Wo betide the family of the rich boor, who, presuming to depart this life without a passport from Dr Luke Lundin for if his representatives had aught to settle with the baron, as it seldom happened otherwise, they were sure to find a cold friend in the chamberlain. He was considerate enough, however, gratuitously to help the poor out of their ailments, and sometimes out of all their other distresses at the same time.

Formal in a double proportion, both as a physician and as a person in office, and proud of the scraps of learning which rendered his language almost universally unintelligible, Dr Luke Lundin approached the beach, and hailed the page as he advanced towards him. "The freshness of the morning upon you, fair sir—You are sent, I warrant me, to see if we observe here the regimen which her good ladyship hath prescribed, for eschewing all superstitious ceremonies and idle vanities in these our revels. I am aware that her good

ladyship would willingly have altogether abolished and abrogated them—But as I had the honour to quote to her from the works of the learned Hervaes of Saxony, *omnis curatio est vel canonica vel coacta*,—that is, fair sir, (for silk and velvet have seldom their Latin *ad unguem*), every cure must be wrought either by art and induction of rule, or by constraint; and the wise physician chooseth the former. Which argument her ladyship being pleased to allow well of, I have made it my business so to blend instruction and caution with delight—*fat mistio*, as we say—that I can answer that the vulgar mind will be defecated and purged of anilo and Popish fopperies by the medicament adhibited, so that the *prima via* being cleansed, Master Henderson, or any other able pastor, may at will throw in tonics, and effectuate a perfect moral cure, *tuto, cito, jucunde*."

"I have no charge, Doctor Lundin," replied the page—

"Call me not doctor," said the chamberlain, "since I have laid aside my furred gown and bonnet, and retired me into this temporality of chamberlainship."

"Oh, sir," said the page, who was no stranger by report to the character of this original, "the owl makes not the monk, neither the cord the friar—we have all heard of the cures wrought by Doctor Lundin."

"Toys, young sir—trifles," answered the leech with grave declamation of superior skill; "the hit-or-miss practice of a poor retired gentleman, in a short cloak and doublet—Marry, Heaven sent its blessing—and this I must say, better fashioned mediciners have brought fewer patients through—*lenga roba corta scienza*, saith the Italian—ha, fair sir, you have the language!"

Roland Gzome did not think it necessary to expound to this learned Theban whether he understood him or no; but leaving that matter uncertain, he told him he came in quest of certain packages which should have arrived at Kinross, and been placed under the chamberlain's charge the evening before.

"Body o' me!" said Doctor Lundin, "I fear our common carrier, John Auchtermuchty, hath met with some mischance, that he came not up last night with his wains—bad land this to journey in my master; and the fool will travel by night too, although, (besides all maladies from your *tussis* to your *pestis*, which walk abroad in the night-air,) he may well fall in with half a dozen swash-bucklers, who will ease him at once of his baggage and his earthly complaints. I must send forth to inquire after him, since he hath stuff of the honourable household on hand—and, by Our Lady, he hath stuff of mine too—certain drugs sent me from the city for composition of my alexipharmic—this gear must be looked to.—Hodge," said he, addressing one of his redoubted body-guard, "do thou and Toby Telford take the mickle brown aver and the black cut-tailed mare, and mak'out towards the Kerry-craigs, and see what tidings you can have of Auchtermuchty and his wains—I trust it is only the medicine of the spottle-pot, (being the only *medicamentum* which the beast useth,) which hath caused him to tarry on the road. Take the ribbons from your halberds, ye knives, and get on your jacks, plate-boots, and knapsacks, that your presence may work some terror if you meet with

opposers." He then added, turning to Roland Græme, "I warrant me we shall have news of the wains in brief season. Meantime it will please you to look upon the sports; but first to enter my poor lodging and take your morning's cup. For what saith the school of Salerno!

*Poculum, mane haustum,
Restaurant naturam exhaustam.*

"Your learning is too profound for me," replied the page; "and so would your draught be likewise, I fear."

"Not a whit, fair sir—a cordial cup of sack, impregnated with wormwood, is the best anti-pestilential draught; and, to speak truth, the pestilential miasmata are now very rife in the atmosphere. We live in a happy time, young man," continued he, in a tone of grave irony, "and have many blessings unknown to our fathers—Here are two sovereigns in the land, a regnant and a claimant—that is enough of one good thing—but if any one wants more, he may find a king in every peel-house in the country; so if we lack government, it is not for want of governors. Then have we a civil war to phlebotomize us every year, and to prevent our population from starving for want of food—and for the same purpose, we have the Plague proposing us a visit, the best of all recipes for thinning a land, and converting younger brothers into elder ones. Well, each man in his vocation. You young fellows of the sword desire to wrestle, fence, or so forth, with some expert adversary; and for my part, I love to match myself for life or death against that same Plague."

As they proceeded up the street of the little village towards the Doctor's lodgings, his attention was successively occupied by the various personages whom he met, and pointed out to the notice of his companion.

"Do you see that fellow with the red bonnet, the blue jerkin, and the great rough baton in his hand?—I believe that clown hath the strength of a tower—he has lived fifty years in the world, and never encouraged the liberal sciences by buying one pennyworth of medicaments.—But see you that man with the *facies hippocratica*?" said he, pointing out a thin peasant, with swelled legs, and a most cadaverous countenance; "that I call one of the worthiest men in the barony—he breakfasts, luncheons, dines, and sups by my advice, and not without my medicine; and, for his own single part, will go farther to clear out a moderate stock of pharmaceuticals, than half the country besides.—How do you, my honest friend?" said he to the party in question, with a tone of condolence.

"Very weakly, sir, since I took the electuary," answered the patient; "it neigbour'd ill with the two spoonfuls of pease-porridge and the kirmilk."

"Pease-porridge and kirmilk! Have you been under medicine these ten years, and keep your diet so ill!—the next morning take the electuary by itself, and touch nothing for six hours."—The poor object bowed, and limped off.

The next whom the Doctor deigned to take notice of, was a lame fellow, by whom the honour was altogether undeserved, for at sight of the mediciner, he began to shuffle away in the crowd as fast as his infirmities would permit.

"There is an ungrateful hound for you," said Doctor Lundin; "I cured him of the gout in his

feet, and now he talks of the chargeableness of medicine, and makes the first use of his restored legs to fly from his physician. His *podagra* hath become a *chiragra*, as honest Martial hath it—the gout has got into his fingers, and he cannot draw his purse. Old saying and true,

Premia cum poscit medicus, Sathan est.

We are angels when we come to cure—devils when we ask payment—but I will administer a purgation to his purse I warrant him. There is his brother too, a sordid chuff.—So ho, there! Saunders Darlet! you have been ill, I hear!"

"Just got the turn, as I was thinking to send to your honour, and I am bravely now again—it was nœ great thing that ailed me."

"Hark you, sirrah," said the Doctor, "I trust you remember you are owing to the laird four stones of barleymeal, and a bow of oats; and I would have you send no more such kain-fowls as you sent last season, that looked as wretchedly as patients just dismissed from a plague-hospital; and there is hard money owing besides."

"I was thinking, sir," said the man, *more Scotico*, that is, returning no direct answer on the subject on which he was addressed, "my best way would be to come down to your honour, and take your advice yet, in case my trouble should come back."

"Do so, then, knave," replied Lundin, "and remember what Ecclesiasticus saith—'Give place to the physician—let him not go from thee, for thou hast need of him.'"

His exhortation was interrupted by an apparition, which seemed to strike the doctor with as much horror and surprise, as his own visage inflicted upon sundry of those persons whom he had addressed.

The figure which produced this effect on the Esculapius of the village, was that of a tall old woman, who wore a high-crowned hat and muffler. The first of these habiliments added apparently to her stature, and the other served to conceal the lower part of her face, and as the hat itself was slouched, little could be seen besides two brown cheek-bones, and the eyes of swarthy fire, that gleamed from under two shaggy gray eyebrows. She was dressed in a long dark-coloured robe of unusual fashion, bordered at the skirts, and on the stomacher, with a sort of white trimming resembling the Jewish phylacteries, on which were wrought the characters of some unknown language. She held in her hand a walking-staff of black ebony.

"By the soul of Celsus," said Doctor Luke Lundin, "it is old Mother Nincenen herself—she hath come to beard me within mine own bounds, and in the very execution of mine office! Have at thy coat, Old Woman, as the song says—Hob Anster, let her presently be seized and committed to the tolbooth; and if there are any zealous brethren here who would give the hag her deserts, and duck her, as a witch, in the loch, I pray let them in no way be hindered."

But the myrmidons of Doctor Lundin shewed in this case no alacrity to do his bidding. Hob Anster even ventured to remonstrate in the name of himself and his brethren. "To be sure he was to do his honour's bidding; and for a' that folk said about the skill and witcheries of Mother Nincenen, he would put his trust in God, and his hand on her

collar, without dreadour. But she was no common spawwife, this Mother Nicneven, like Jean Jopp that lived in the Brierie-bank. She had lords and lairds that would ruffle for her. There was Moncrieff of Tippermalloch, that was Popish, and the laird of Caralogie, a kenz Queen's man, were in the fair, with wha kenz how many swords and bucklers at their back; and they would be sure to make a break-out if the officers meddled with the auld Popish witch-wife, who was sae weel friended; mair especially as the laird's best men, such as were not in the castle, were in Edinburgh with him, and he doubted his honour the Doctor would find ower few to make a good backing, if blades were bare."

The Doctor listened unwillingly to this prudential counsel, and was only comforted by the faithful promise of his satellite, that "the old woman should," as he expressed it, "be ta'en canny the next time she trespassed on the bounds."

"And in that event," said the Doctor to his companion, "fire and fagot shall be the best of her welcome."

This he spoke in hearing of the dame herself, who even then, and in passing the Doctor, shot towards him from under her gray eyebrows a look of the most insulting and contemptuous superiority.

"This way," continued the physician, "this way," marshalling his guest into his lodging,—"take care you stumble not over a retort, for it is hazardous for the ignorant to walk in the ways of art."

The page found all reason for the caution; for besides stuffed birds, and lizards, and snakes bottled up, and bundles of simples made up, and other parcels spread out to dry, and all the confusion, not to mention the mingled and sickening smells, incidental to a druggist's stock in trade, he had also to avoid heaps of charcoal, crucibles, bolt-heads, stoves, and the other furniture of a chemical laboratory.

Amongst his other philosophical qualities, Doctor Lundin failed not to be a confused slob, and his old dame housekeeper, whose life, as she said, was spent in "redding him up," had trotted off to the mart of gaiety with other and younger folks. Much clattering and jangling therefore there was among jars, and bottles, and vials, ere the Doctor produced the salutiferous potion which he recommended so strongly, and a search equally long and noisy followed, among broken cans and cracked pipkins, ere he could bring forth a cup out of which to drink it. Both matters being at length achieved, the Doctor set the example to his guest, by quaffing off a cup of the cordial, and smacking his lips with approbation as it descended his gullet. — Roland, in turn, submitted to swallow the potion which his host so earnestly recommended, but which he found so insufferably bitter, that he became eager to escape from the laboratory in search of a draught of fair water to expel the taste. In spite of his efforts, he was nevertheless declined by the garrulity of his host, till he gave him some account of Mother Nicneven.

"I care not to speak of her," said the Doctor, "in the open air, and among the throng of people; not for fright, like you cowardly dog Anster, but because I would give no occasion for a fray, having no leisure to look to stabs, slashes, and broken bones. Men call the old hag a prophetess—I do scarce believe she could foretell when a brood of chickens will ship the shell—Men say she reads the heavens—my black bitch knows as much of

them when she sits baying the moon—Men pretend the ancient wretch is a sorceress, a witch, and what not—*Inter nos*, I will never contradict a rumour which may bring her to the stake which she so justly deserves; but neither will I believe that the tales of witches which they din into our ears are, aught but knavery, cozenage, and old woman's fables."

"In the name of Heaven, what is she then," said the page, "that you make suell a stir about her?"

"She is one of those cursed old women," replied the Doctor, "who take currently and impudently upon themselves to act as advisers and curers of the sick, on the strength of some trash of herbs, some rhyme of spells, some julep or diet, drink or cordial."

"Nay, go no further," said the page; "if they brew cordials, evil be their lot and all their partakers!"

"You say well, young man," said Doctor Lundin; "for mine own part, I know no such pests to the commonwealth as these old incarnate devils, who haunt the chambers of the brain-sick patients, that are mad enough to suffer them to interfere with, disturb, and let, the regular progress of a learned and artificial cure, with their sirups, and their juleps, and discordium, and mithridate, and my Lady What-shall-call 'un's powder, and worthy Dame Trashem's pill; and thus make widows and orphans, and cheat the regular and well-studied physician, in order to get the name of wise women and sneaky neighbours, and so forth. But no more on't—Mother Nicneven and I will meet one day; and she shall know there is danger in dealing with the doctor."

"It is a true word, and many have found it," said the page; "but, under your favour, I would fain walk abroad for a little, and see these sports."

"It is well moved," said the Doctor, "and I too should be shewing myself abroad. Moreover the play waits us, young man—to-day, *totus mundus agit histrionem*."—And they sallied forth accordingly into the mirthful scene.

CHAPTER XXVII.

- See on yon verdant lawn, the gathering crowd
- Thickens amain; the buxom nymphs advance,
- Utter'd by jolly clowns; distinctions cease,
- Lost in the common joy, and the bold slave
- Leans on his weakly master unprovoked.

• *Rural Games*.—BOMERVILLE.

THE re-appearance of the dignified Chamberlain on the street of the village was eagerly hailed by the revellers, as a pledge that the play, or dramatic representation, which had been postponed owing to his absence, was now full surely to commence. Any thing like an approach to this most interesting of all amusements, was of recent origin in Scotland, and engaged public attention in proportion. All other sports were discontinued. The dance around the Maypole was arrested—the ring broken up

¹ This was the name given to the grand Mother Witch, the very Essence of Scottish popular superstition. Her name was bestowed, in one or two instances, upon apprentices, who were held to resemble her by their superior skill in "fidd's black grammar."

and dispersed, while the dancers, each leading his partner by the hand, tripped off to the sylvan theatre. A truce was in like manner achieved between a huge brown bear and certain mastiffs, who were tugging and pulling at his shaggy coat, under the mediation of the bear-ward and half a dozen butchers and yeomen, who, by dint of *staring and tailing*, as it was technically termed, separated the unfortunate animals, whose fury had for an hour past been their chief amusement. The itinerant minstrel found himself deserted by the audience he had collected, even in the most interesting passages of the romance which he recited, and just as he was sending about his bay, with bonnet in hand, to collect their obligations. He indignantly stopped short in the midst of *Roseland and Lillian*, and, replacing his three-stringed fiddle, or rebeck, in its leathern case, followed the crowd, with no good-will, to the exhibition which had superseded his own. The juggler had ceased his exertions of emitting flame and smoke, and was content to respire in the manner of ordinary mortals, rather than to play gratuitously the part of a fiery dragon. In short, all other sports were suspended, so eagerly did the revellers throng towards the place of representation.

They would err greatly, who should regulate their ideas of this dramatic exhibition upon those derived from a modern theatre; for the rude shows of Theopis were far less different from those exhibited by Euripides on the stage of Athens, with all its magnificent decorations and pomp of dresses and of scenery. In the present case, there were no scenes, no stage, no machinery, no pit, box, and gallery, no box-lobby; and, what might in poor Scotland be some consolation for other negotiations, there was no taking of money at the door. As in the devices of the magnanimous Bottom, the actors had a green-sward plot for a stage, and a hawthorn bush for a green-room and tiring-house; the spectators being accommodated with seats on the artificial bank which had been raised about three-fourths of the playground, the remainder being left open for the entrance and exit of the performers. Here sat the uncritical audience, the Chamberlain in the centre, as the person highest in office, all alive to enjoyment and admiration, and all therefore dead to criticism.

The characters which appeared and disappeared before the amused and interested audience, were those which fill the earlier stage in all nations — old men, cheated by their wives and daughters, pillaged by their sons, and imposed on by their domestics, a braggadocio captain, a knavish pardoner or quack-dragon, a country bumpkin, and a wanton city dame. Amid all these, and more acceptable than almost the whole put together, was the all-licensed fool, the Gracioso of the Spanish drama, who, with his cap fashioned into the resemblance of a box-corn, and his bauble, a truncheon terminated by a carved figure, wearing a fool's cap in his hand, went, came, and returned, mingling in every scene of the piece, and interrupting the business, without having any share himself in the action, and ever and anon transferring his gibes from the actors on the stage to the audience who sat around, prompt to applaud the whole.

The wit of the piece, which was not of the most polished kind, was chiefly directed against the superstitious practices of the Catholic religion; and the stage artillery had on this occasion been levelled by

no less a person than Doctor Lundin, who had not only commanded the manager of the entertainment to select one of the numerous satires which had been written against the Papists, (several of which were cast in a dramatic form,) but had even, like the Prince of Denmark, caused them to insert, or, according to his own phrase, to infuse, here and there, a few pleasantries of his own penning, on the same inexhaustible subject, hoping thereby to mollify the rigour of the Lady of Lochleven towards pastimes of this description. He failed not to jog Roland's elbow, who was sitting in state behind him, and recommend to his particular attention those favourite passages. As for the page, to whom the very idea of such an exhibition, simple as it was, was entirely new, he beheld it with the undiminished and ecstatic delight with which men of all ranks look for the first time on dramatic representation, and laughed, shouted, and clapped his hands as the performance proceeded. An incident at length took place which effectually broke off his interest in the business of the scene.

One of the principal personages in the comic part of the drama was, as we have already said, a questionary or pardoner, one of those itinerants who hawked about from place to place relics, real or pretended, with which he excited the devotion at once, and the charity of the populace, and generally deceived both the one and the other. The hypocrisy, impudence, and profligacy of these clerical waunderers, had made them the subject of satire from the time of Chaucer down to that of Heywood. Their present representative failed not to follow the same line of humour, exhibiting pig's bones for relics, and boasting the virtues of small tin crosses, which had been shaken in the holy porringer at Loretto, and of cockleshells, which had been brought from the shrine of Saint James of Compostella, all which he disposed of to the devout Catholics at nearly as high a price as antiquaries are now willing to pay for baubles of similar intrinsic value. At length the pardoner pulled from his scrip a small phial of clear water, of which he vaunted the quality in the following verses:—

Listeth, gode people, everiche one,
For in the londe of Babylone,
Far eastward I wot it lyeth,
And is the first londe the somme capiteh,
Ther, as he cometh fro out the se;
In this ilk londe, as thinketh me,
Eight as helle legendes tell,
Sootherth from aguthe well,
And falleth into the bath of son,
Where chaste Summe, in times long gon,
Was wont to wash her bodie and him—
Mickle vertue hath that streame,
As ye shall se er that ye pas,
For example by this little glas—
Through nightes cold and dayes hote
If I have it brought;
Hath a wife made slip or slide,
Or a maiden stepp'd aside,
Putteth this water under her bee,
Wold she hold she, she shall see.

The jest, as the reader skilful in the antique language of the drama must at once perceive, turned on the same pivot as in the old minstrel tales of the Drinking Horn of King Arthur, and the Mantle made Amys. But the audience were neither learned nor critical enough to challenge its want of originality. The potent relic was, after such grimace and buffoonery as befitted the subject, presented successively to each of the female personages of the drama, not one of whom sustained the supposed test

of discretion; but, to the infinite delight of the audience, sneezed much louder and longer than perhaps they themselves had counted on. The jester seemed at last worn threadbare, and the pardoner was passing on to some new pleasantry, when the jester or clown of the drama, possessing himself secretly of the phial which contained the wondrous liquor, applied it suddenly to the nose of a young woman, who, with her black silk muffler, or screen drawn over her face, was sitting in the foremost rank of the spectators, intent apparently upon the business of the stage. The contents of the phial, well calculated to sustain the credit of the pardoner's legend, set the damsel sneezing violently, an admission of frailty which was received with shouts of rapture by the audience. These were soon, however, renewed at the expense of the jester himself, when the insulted maiden extricated, ere the paroxysm was well over, one hand from the folds of her mantle, and bestowed on the wag a buffet, which made him reel fully his own length from the pardoner, and then acknowledge the favour by instant prostration.

No one pities a jester overcome in his vocation, and the clown met with little sympathy, when, rising from the ground, and whimpering forth his complaints of harsh treatment, he invoked the assistance and sympathy of the audience. But the Chamberlain, feeling his own dignity insulted, ordered two of his halberdiers to bring the culprit before him. When these official persons first approached the virago, she threw herself into an attitude of firm defiance, as if determined to resist their authority; and from the sample of strength and spirit which she had already displayed, they shewed no alacrity at executing their commission. But on half a minute's reflection, the damsel changed totally her attitude and manner, folded her cloak around her arms in modest and maiden-like fashion, and walked of her own accord to the presence of the great man, followed and guarded by the two manifold satellites. As she moved across the vacant space, and more especially as she stood at the footstool of the Doctor's judgment-seat, the maiden discovered that lightness and elasticity of step, and natural grace of manner, which connoisseurs in female beauty know to be seldom divided from it. Moreover, her neat russet-coloured jacket, and short petticoat of the same colour, displayed a handsome form and a pretty leg. Her features were concealed by the screen; but the Doctor, whose gravity did not prevent his pretensions to be a connoisseur of the school we have hinted at, saw enough to judge favourably of the piece by the sample.

He began, however, with considerable austerity of manner. — "And how now, saucy queen!" said the medical man of office; "what have you to say why I should not order you to be ducked in the loch, for lifting your hand to the man in my presence?"

"Marry," replied the culprit, "because I judge that your honour will not think the cold bath necessary for my complaints."

"A pestilent jade," said the Doctor, whispering to Roland Grame; "and I'll warrant her a good one—her voice is as sweet as shirup. — But, my pretty maiden," said he, "you show us wonderful little of that countenance of yours—be pleased to throw aside your muffler."

"I trust your honour will excuse me till we are more private," answered the maiden; "for I have

acquaintance, and I should like ill to be known in the country as the poor girl whom that scurvy knave put himjest upon."

"Fear nothing for thy good name, my sweet little modicum of candied mauna," replied the Doctor. "for I protest to you, as I am Chamberlain of Lochleven, Kiurross, and so forth, that the chaste Susanna herself could not have snuffed that elixir without sternutation, being in truth a curious distillation of rectified acetum, or vinegar of the sun, prepared by mine own hands—Wherefore, as thou sayest thou wilt come to me in private, and express thy contrition for the offence whereof thou hast been guilty, I command that all for the present go forward as if no such interruption of the prescribed course had taken place."

The damsel curtained and tripped back to her place. The play proceeded, but it no longer attracted the attention of Roland Grame.

The voice, the figure, and what the veil permitted to be seen of the neck and tresses of the village damsel, bore so strong a resemblance to those of Catherine Seyton, that he felt like one bewildered in the mazes of a changeful and stupifying dream. The memorable scene of the hostelry rushed on his recollection, with all its doubtful and marvellous circumstances. Were the tales of enchantment which he had read in romances realized in this extraordinary girl? Could she transport herself from the walled and guarded Castle of Lochleven, moated with its broad lake, (towards which he cast back a look as if to ascertain it was still in existence,) and watched with such scrupulous care as the safety of a nation demanded—Could she surmount all these obstacles, and make such careless and dangerous use of her liberty, as to engage herself publicly in a quarrel in a village fair? Roland was unable to determine whether the exertions which it must have cost her to gain her freedom, or the use to which she had put it, rendered her the most unaccountable creature.

Lost in these meditations, he kept his gaze fixed on the subject of them; and in every casual motion, discovered, or thought he discovered, something which reminded him still more strongly of Catherine Seyton. It occurred to him more than once, indeed, that he might be deceiving himself by exaggerating some casual likeness into absolute identity. But then the meeting at the hostelry of Saint Michael's returned to his mind, and it seemed in the highest degree improbable, that, under such various circumstances, mere imagination should twice have found opportunity to play him the self-same trick. This time, however, he determined to have his doubts resolved, and for this purpose he sat during the rest of the play like a greyhound in the slip, ready to spring upon the hare the instant that she was started. The damsel, whom he watched attentively lest she should escape in the crowd when the spectacle was closed, sat as if perfectly unconscious that she was observed. But the worthy Doctor marked the direction of his eye, and magnanimously suppressed his own inclination to become the Theseus to this Hippolyta, in deference to the rights of hospitality, which enjoined him to forbear interference with the pleasurable pursuits of his young friend. He passed one or two formal glances upon the fixed attention which the page paid to the unknown, and upon his own jealousy; adding, however, that if both were to be presented to the patient

at once, he had little doubt she would think the younger man the sounder prescription. "I fear me," he added, "we shall have no news of the knave Auchtermuchty, for some time, since the warmin whom I sent after him seem to have proved corbie-messengers. So you have an hour or two on your hands, Mr Page; and as the minstrels are beginning to strike up, now that the play is ended, why, an you incline for a dance, yonder is the green, and there sits your partner—I trust you will hold me perfect in my diagnosis, since I see with half an eye what disease you are sick of, and have administered a pleasing remedy."

Excipit sapiens res, (as Chambers hath 't) quas con-jundit astutus.

The page hardly heard the end of the learned adage, or the charge which the Chamberlain gave him to be within reach, in case of the wains arriving suddenly, and sooner than expected—so eager he was at once to shake himself free of his learned associate, and to satisfy his curiosity regarding the unknown damsel. Yet in the haste with which he made towards her, he found time to reflect, that, in order to secure an opportunity of conversing with her in private, he must not alarm her at first accosting her. He therefore composed his manner and gait, and advancing with becoming self-confidence before three or four country-fellows who were intent on the same design, but knew not so well how to put their request into shape, he acquainted her that he, as the deputy of the venerable Chamberlain, requested the honour of her hand as a partner.

"The venerable Chamberlain," said the damsel frankly, reaching the page her hand, "does very well to exercise this part of his privilege by deputy; and I suppose the laws of the revels leave me no choice but to accept of his faithful delegate."

"Provided, fair damsel," said the page, "his choice of a delegate is not altogether distasteful to you."

"Of that, fair sir," replied the maiden, "I will tell you more when we have danced the first measure."

Catherine Seyton had admirable skill in gestic lore, and was sometimes called on to dance for the amusement of her royal mistress. Roland Græme had often been a spectator of her skill, and sometimes, at the Queen's command, Catherine's partner on such occasions. He was, therefore, perfectly acquainted with Catherine's mode of dancing; and observed that his present partner, in grace, in agility, in quickness of ear, and precision of execution, exactly resembled her, save that the Scottish jig, which he now danced with her, required a more violent and rapid motion, and more rustic agility, than the stately pavens, lavoltas, and courantoos, which he had seen her execute in the chamber of Queen Mary. The active duties of the dance left him little time for reflection, and none for conversation; but when their *pas de deux* was finished, amidst the acclamations of the villagers, who had seldom witnessed such an exhibition, he took an opportunity, when they yielded up the green to another couple, to use the privilege of a partner, and enter into conversation with the mysterious maiden, whom he still held by the hand.

"Fair partner, may I not crave the name of her who has graced me thus far?"

"You may," said the maiden; "but it is a question whether I shall answer you."

"And why?" asked Roland.

"Because nobody gives any thing for nothing—and you can tell me nothing in return which I care to hear."

"Could I not tell you my name and lineage, in exchange for yours?" returned Roland.

"No!" answered the maiden, "for you know little of either."

"How!" said the page, somewhat angrily.

"Wrath you not for the matter," said the damsel; "I will shew you in an instant that I know more of you than you do of yourself."

"Indeed!" answered Græme; "for whom then do you take me?"

"For the wild falcon," answered she, "whom a dog brought in his mouth to a certain castle, when he was but an unfledged eyas—for the hawk whom men dare not let fly, lest he should check at game, and pounce on carrion—whom folk must keep hooded till he has the proper light of his eyes, and can discover good from evil."

"Well—he is so," replied Roland Græme; "I guess, at a part of your parable, fair mistress mine—and perhaps I know as much of you as you do of me, and can well dispense with the information which you are so niggard in giving."

"Prove that," said the maiden, "and I will give you credit for more penetration than I judged you to be gifted with."

"It shall be proved instantly," said Roland Græme. "The first letter of your name is S, and the last N."

"Admirable!" said his partner; "guess on."

"It pleases you to-day," continued Roland, "to wear the smock and kirtle, and perhaps you may be seen to-morrow in hat and feather, hose and doublet."

"In the clout! in the clout! you have hit the very white," said the damsel, suppressing a great inclination to laugh.

"You can switch men's eyes out of their heads, as well as the heart out of their bosoms."

These last words were uttered in a low and tender tone, which, to Roland's great mortification, and somewhat to his displeasure, was so far from allaying, that it greatly increased, his partner's disposition to laughter. She could scarce compose herself while she replied, "If you had thought my hand so formidable," extricating it from his hold, "you would not have grasped it so hard; but I perceive you know me so fully, that there is no occasion to shew you my face."

"Fair Catherine," said the page, "he were unworthy ever to have seen you, far less to have dwelt so long in the same service, and under the same roof with you, who could mistake your air, your gesture, your step in walking or in dancing, the turn of your neck, the symmetry of your form—none could be so dull as not to recognize you by so many proofs; but for me, I could swear even to that tress of hair that escapes from under your muffler."

"And to the face, of course, which that muffler covers," said the maiden, removing her veil, and in an instant endeavouring to replace it. She showed the features of Catherine; but an unusual degree of petulant impatience inflamed them, when, from some awkwardness in her management of the

muffler, she was unable again to adjust it with that dexterity which was a principal accomplishment of the coquettes of the time.

"The fiend rive the rag to tatters!" said the damsel, as the veil fluttered about her shoulders, with an accent so earnest and decided, that it made the page start. He looked again at the damsel's face, but the information which his eyes received, was to the same purport as before. He assisted her to adjust her muffler, and both were for an instant silent. The damsel spoke first, for Roland Grème was overwhelmed with surprise at the contrivances which Catharine Seyton seemed to include in her person and character.

"You are surprised," said the damsel to him, "at what you see and hear—But the times which make females men, are least of all fitted for men to become women; yet you yourself are in danger of such a change."

"I in danger of becoming effeminate!" said the page.

"Yes, you, for all the boldness of your reply," said the damsel. "When you should hold fast your religion, because it is assailed on all sides by rebels, traitors, and heretics, you let it glide out of your breast like water grasped in the hand. If you are driven from the faith of your fathers from fear of a traitor, is not that womanish!—If you are cajoled by the cunning arguments of a trumpeter of heresy, or the praises of a puritanic old woman, is not that womanish!—If you are bribed by the hope of spoil and preferment, is not that womanish!—And when you wonder at my venting a threat or an execration, should you not wonder at yourself, who, pretending to a gentle name and aspiring to knight-hood, can be at the same time cowardly, silly, and self-interested!"

"I would that a man would bring such a charge," said the page; "he should see, ere his life was a minute older, whether he had cause to term me coward or no."

"Beware of such big words," answered the maiden; "you said but anon that I sometimes wear hose and doublet."

"But remain still Catharine Seyton, wear what you list," said the page, endeavouring again to possess himself of her hand.

"You indeed are pleased to call me so," replied the maiden, evading his intention, "but I have many other names besides."

"And will you not reply to that," said the page, "by which you are distinguished beyond every other maiden in Scotland?"

The damsel, unallured by his praises, still kept aloof, and sang with gaiety a verse from an old ballad,

"Oh, some do call me Jack, sweet love,
And some do call me Gill;
But when I ride to Holyrood,
My name is Wilful Will."

"Wilful Will!" exclaimed the page, impatiently; "may rather—Will o' the Wisp—Jack with the Lantern—for never was such a deceitful or wandering meteor!"

"If I be such," replied the maiden, "I ask no spoils to follow me—If they do so, it is at their own pleasure, and must be on their own proper peril."

"Nay, but, dearest Catherine," said Roland Grème, "be for one instant serious."

"If you will call me your dearest Catherine, whom I have given you so many names to choose upon," replied the damsel, "I would ask you how, supposing me for two or three hours of my life escaped from yonder tower, you have the cruelty to ask me to be serious during the only merry moments I have seen perhaps for months!"

"Ay, but, fair Catherine, there are moments of deep and true feeling, which are worth ten thousand years of the liveliest mirth; and such was that of yesterday, when you so nearly——"

"So nearly what?" demanded the damsel, hastily.

"When you approached your lips so near to the sign you had traced on my forehead."

"Mother of Heaven!" exclaimed she, in a yet fiercer tone, and with a more masculine manner than she had yet exhibited,—"Catherine Seyton approach her lips to a man's brow, and thou that man!—vassal, thou liest!"

The page stood astonished; but, conceiving he had alarmed the damsel's delicacy by alluding to the enthusiasm of a moment, and the manner in which she had expressed it, he endeavoured to falter forth an apology. His excuses, though he was unable to give them any regular shape, were accepted by his companion, who had indeed suppressed her indignation after its first explosion—"Speak no more on't," she said. "And now let us part; our conversation may attract more notice than is convenient for either of us."

"Nay, but allow me at least to follow you to some sequestered place."

"You dare not," replied the maiden.

"How," said the youth, "dare not I where is it you dare go, where I dare not follow?"

"You fear a Will o' the Wisp," said the damsel; "how would you face a fiery dragon, with an enchantress mounted on its back?"

"Like Sir Eger, Sir Grime, or Sir Greyfriar," said the page; "but be there such toys to be seen here?"

"I go to Mother Nicneven's," answered the maid; "and she is witch enough to rein the horned devil, with a red silk thread for a bridle, and a rowan-tree switch for a whip."

"I will follow, you," said the page.

"Let it be at some distance," said the maiden.

And wrapping her mantle round her with more success than on her former attempt, she mingled with the throng, and walked towards the village, heedfully followed by Roland Grème at some distance, and under every precaution which he could use to prevent his purpose from being observed.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Yes, it is he whose eyes look'd on thy childhood,
And watch'd with trembling hope thy dawn of youth,
That now, with these same eyeballs dimm'd with age,
And dimmer yet with tears, sees thy dissolution.

Old Play.

At the entrance of the principal, or indeed, so to speak, the only street in Kinross, the damsel, whose steps were pursued by Roland Grème, cast a glance behind her, as if to be certain he had not lost trace of her, and then plunged down a very narrow lane which ran betwixt two rows of poor and ruinous cottages. She passed for a second at

the door of one of those miserable tenements, again cast her eye up the lane towards Roland, then lifted the latch, opened the door, and disappeared from his view.

With whatever haste the page followed her example, the difficulty which he found in discovering the trick of the latch, which did not work quite in the usual manner, and in pushing open the door, which did not yield to his first effort, delayed for a minute or two his entrance into the cottage. A dark and smoky passage led, as usual, betwixt the exterior wall of the house, and the *hallum*, or clay-wall, which served as a partition betwixt it and the interior. At the end of this passage, and through the partition, was a door leading into the *ben*, or inner chamber of the cottage, and when Roland Græme's hand was upon the latch of this door, a female voice pronounced, "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini, damnandus qui in nomine istius.*" On entering the apartment, he perceived the figure which the chamberlain had pointed out to him as Mother Nicneven, seated beside the lowly hearth. But there was no other person in the room. Roland Græme gazed around in surprise at the disappearance of Catherine Seyton, without paying much regard to the supposed sorceress, until she attracted and riveted his regard by the tone in which she asked him—"What seekest thou here?"

"I seek," said the page, with much embarrassment; "I seek—"

But his answer was cut short, when the old woman, drawing her huge gray eyebrows sternly together, with a frown which knitted her brow into a thousand wrinkles, arose, and erecting herself up to her full natural size, took the kingly step from her head, and seizing Roland by the arm, made two strides across the floor of the apartment to a small window through which the light fell full on her face, and shewed the astonished youth the countenance of Magdalen Græme.—"Yes, Roland," she said, "thine eyes deceive thee not; they show thee truly the features of her whom thou hast thyself deceived, whose wine thou hast turned into gall, her bread of joyfulness into bitter poison, her hope into the blackest despair—it is she who now demands of thee, what seekest thou here?—She whose heaviest sin towards Heaven hath been, that she loved thee ever better than the weal of the whole church, and could not without reluctance surrender thee even in the cause of God—she now asks you, what seekest thou here?"

While she spoke, she kept her broad black eye riveted on the youth's face, with the expression with which the eagle regards his prey ere he tears it to pieces. Roland felt himself at that moment incapable either of reply or evasion. This extraordinary enthusiast had preserved over him in some measure the ascendancy which she had acquired during his childhood; and, besides, he knew the violence of her passions and her impatience of contradiction, and was sensible that almost any reply which he could make, was likely to throw her into an ecstasy of rage. He was therefore silent; and Magdalen Græme proceeded with increasing enthusiasm in her apostrophe—"Once more, what seek'st thou, false boy?—seek'st thou the honour thou hast renounced, the faith thou hast abandoned, the hopes thou hast destroyed?—Or didst thou seek me, the sole protectress of thy youth, the only parent whom thou hast known, that thou mayest

trample on my gray hairs, even as thou hast already trampled on the best wishes of my heart?"

"Pardon me, mother," said Roland Græme; "but, in truth and reason, I deserve not your blame. I have been treated amongst you—even by yourself, my revered parent, as well as by others—as one who lacked the common attributes of free-will and human reason, or was at least deemed unfit to exercise them. A land of enchantment have I been led into, and spells have been cast around me—every one has met me in disguise—every one has spoken to me in parables—I have been like one who walks in a weary and bewildering dream; and now you blame me that I have not the sense, and judgment, and steadiness of a waking, and a disenchanted, and a reasonable man, who knows what he is doing, and wherefore he does it. If one must walk with masks and spectres, who waft themselves from place to place as it were in vision rather than reality, it might shake the soundest faith and turn the wisest head. I sought, since I must needs avow my folly, the same Catherine Seyton with whom you made me first acquainted, and whom I most strangely find in this village of Kinross, gayest among the revellers, when I had but just left her in the well-guarded castle of Lochleven, the sad attendant of an imprisoned Queen—I sought her, and in her place I find you, my mother, more strangely disguised than even she is."

"And what hadst thou to do with Catherine Seyton?" said the matron, sternly; "is this a time or a world to follow maidens, or to dance around a Maypole! When the trumpet summons every true-hearted Scotsman around the standard of the true sovereign, shalt thou be found loitering in a lady's bower?"

"No, by Heaven, nor imprisoned in the rugged walls of an island castle!" answered Roland Græme: "I would the blast were to sound even now, for I fear that nothing less loud will dispel the chimerical visions by which I am surrounded."

"Doubt not that it will be winded," said the matron, "and that so fearfully loud, that Scotland will never hear the like until the last and loudest blast of all shall announce to mountain and to valley that time is no more. Meanwhile, be thou but brave and constant—Serve God and honour thy sovereign—Abide by thy religion—I cannot—I will not—I dare not ask thee the truth of the terrible surmises I have heard touching thy falling away—perfect not that acquired sacrifice—and yet, even at this late hour, thou mayest be what I have hoped for the son of my dearest hope—what say'st thou of my hope—thou shalt be the hope of Scotland, her boast and her honour!—Even thy wildest and most foolish wishes may perchance be fulfilled—I might blush to mingle meaner motives with the noble guardon I hold out to thee—It shames me, being such as I am, to mention the idle passions of youth, save with contempt and the purpose of censure. But we must bribe children to wholesome medicine by the offer of cakes, and youth to honourable achievement with the promise of pleasure. Mark me, therefore, Roland. The love of Catherine Seyton will follow him only who shall achieve the freedom of her mistress; and believe, it may be one day in thine own power to be that happy lover. Cast, therefore, away doubt and fear, and prepare to do what religion calls for, what thy country demands of thee, what thy duty as a

subject and as a servant alike require at your hand; and be assured, even the slightest of your wishes of thy heart will be most readily obtained by following the call of thy duty."

As she ceased speaking, a double knock was heard against the inner door. The matron hastily adjusting her muffler, and resuming her chair by the hearth, demanded who was there.

"*Salvo in nomine sancto,*" was answered from without.

"*Salvo et eoe,*" answered Magdalen Gramme.

And a man entered in the ordinary dress of a nobleman's retainer, wearing at his girdle a sword and buckler—"I sought you," said he, "my mother, and him whom I see with you." Then addressing himself to Roland Gramme, he said to him, "Hast thou not a packet from George Douglas?"

"I have," said the page, suddenly recollecting that which had been committed to his charge in the morning, "but I may not deliver it to any one without some token that they have a right to ask it."

"You say well," replied the serving-man, and whispered into his ear, "The packet which I ask is the report to his father—will this token suffice?"

"It will," replied the page, and taking the packet from his bosom, gave it to the man.

"I will return presently," said the serving-man, and left the cottage.

Roland had now sufficiently recovered his surprise to accost his relative in turn, and request to know the reason why he found her in so precarious a disguise, and a place so dangerous—"You cannot be ignorant," he said, "of the hatred that the Lady of Lochleven bears to those of your—that is of our religion—your present disguise lays you open to suspicions of a different kind, but inferring no less hazard; and whether as a Catholic, or as a sorceress, or as a friend to the unfortunate Queen, you are in equal danger, if apprehended within the bounds of the Douglas; and in the chamberlain who administers their authority, you have, for his own reasons, an enemy, and a bitter one."

"I know it," said the matron, her eyes kindling with triumph; "I know that, vain of his schoolcraft, and carnal wisdom, Luke Lumdin views with jealousy and hatred the blessings which the saints have conferred on my prayers, and on the holy relics, before the touch, nay, before the bare presence of which, disease and death have so often been known to retreat.—I know he would rend and tear me; but there is a chain and a muzzle on the ban-dog that shall restrain his fury, and the Master's servant shall not be offended by him until the Master's work is wrought.—When that hour comes, let the shadows of the evening descend on me in thunder and in tempest; the time shall be welcome that relieves my eyes from seeing guilt, and my ears from listening to blasphemy. Do thou but be constant—play thy part as I have played and will play mine, and my release shall be like that of a blessed martyr whose ascent to heaven angels hail with psalm and song, while earth pursues him with his and with execration."

As she concluded, the serving-man again entered the cottage, and said, "All is well! the time holds for to-morrow night."

"What time! what holds?" exclaimed Roland Gramme; "I trust I have given the Douglas's packet to no wrong person."

"Content yourself, young man," answered the serving-man; "thou hast my word and token."

"I know not if the token be right," said the page; "and I care not much for the word of a stranger."

"What," said the matron, "although thou mayest have given a packet delivered to thy charge by one of the Queen's rebels into the hand of a loyal subject—there were no great mistake in that, thou hot-brained boy!"

"By Saint Andrew, there were foul mistake, though," answered the page; "it is the very spirit of my duty, in this first stage of chivalry, to be faithful to my trust; and had the devil given me a message to discharge, I would not (so I had plighted my faith to the contrary) betray his counsel to an angel of light."

"Now, by the love I once bore thee," said the matron, "I could slay thee with mine own hand, when I hear thee talk of a dearer faith being due to rebels and heretics, than thou owest to thy church and thy prince!"

"Be patient, my good sister," said the serving-man; "I will give him such reasons as shall counterbalance the scruples which beset him—the spirit is honourable, though now it may be mistimed and misplaced.—Follow me, young man."

"Ere I go to call this stranger to a reckoning," said the page to the matron, "is there nothing I can do for your comfort and safety?"

"Nothing," she replied, "nothing, save what will lead more to thine own honour;—the saints who have protected me thus far, will lend me succour as I need it. Tread the path of glory that is before thee, and only think of me as the creature on earth who will be most delighted to hear of thy fame.—Follow the stranger—he hath tidings for you that you little expect."

The stranger remained on the threshold as if waiting for Roland, and as soon as he saw him put himself in motion, he moved on before at a quick pace. Diving still deeper down the lane, Roland perceived that it was now bordered by buildings upon the one side only, and that the other was fenced by a high old wall, over which some trees extended their branches. Descending a good way farther, they came to a small door in the wall. Roland's guide paused, looked around for an instant to see if any one were within sight, then taking a key from his pocket, opened the door and entered, making a sign to Roland Gramme to follow him. He did so, and the stranger locked the door carefully on the inside. During this operation the page had a moment to look around, and perceived that he was in a small orchard very trimly kept.

The stranger led him through an alley or two, shaded by trees loaded with summer-fruit, into a pleached arbour, where, taking the turf-seat which was on the one side, he motioned to Roland to occupy that which was opposite to him, and, after a momentary silence, opened the conversation as follows: "You have asked a better warrant than the word of a mere stranger, to satisfy you that I have the authority of George of Douglas for possessing myself of the packet intrusted to your charge?"

"It is precisely the point on which I demand reckoning of you," said Roland. "I fear I have acted hastily; if so, I must redeem my error as I best may."

"You hold me then as a perfect stranger?" said

the man. "Look at my face more attentively; and see if the features do not resemble those of a man much known to you formerly."

Roland gazed attentively; but the ideas recalled to his mind were so inconsistent with the mean and servile dress of the person before him, that he did not venture to express the opinion which he was irresistibly induced to form.

"Yes, my son," said the stranger, observing his embarrassment, "you do indeed see before you this unfortunate Father Ambrosius, who once accounted his ministry crowned in your preservation from the snares of heresy, but who is now condemned to lament ^{there} as a castaway!"

Roland Graeme's kindness of heart was at least equal to his vivacity of temper—he could not bear to see his ancient and honoured master and spiritual guide in a situation which inferred a change of fortune so melancholy, but, throwing himself at his feet, grasped his knees and wept aloud.

"What mean these tears, my son?" said the Abbot; "if they are shed for your own sins and follies, surely they are gracious showers, and may avail thee much—but, weep not, if they fall in my account. You indeed see the Superior of the community of Saint Mary's in the dress of a poor swordsman, who gives his master the use of his blade and buckler, and, if needful, of his life, for a coarse livery coat, and four marks by the year. But such a garb suits the time, and, in the period of the church militant, as well becomes her prelates, as staff, mitre, and crozier, in the days of the church's triumph."

"By what fate," said the page—"and yet why," added he, checking himself, "need I ask it, Catherine Seyton in some sort prepared me for this. But that the change should be so absolute—the destruction so complete!"

"Yes, my son," said the Abbot Ambrosius, "thine own eyes beheld, in my unworthy elevation to the Abbot's stall, the last especial act of holy solemnity which shall be seen in the church of Saint Mary's, until it shall please Heaven to turn back the captivity of the church. For the present, the shepherd is smitten—ay, well-nigh to the earth—the flock are scattered, and the shrines of saints and martyrs, and pious benefactors to the church, are given to the owls of night, and the satyrs of the desert."

"And your brother, the Knight of Avenel—could he do nothing for your protection?"

"He himself hath fallen under the suspicion of the ruling powers," said the Abbot, "who are as unjust to their friends as they are cruel to their enemies. I could not grieve at it, did I hope it might estrange him from his cause; but I know the son of Halbert, and I rather fear it will drive him to prove his fidelity to their unhappy cause, by some deed which may be yet more destructive to the church, and more offensive to Heaven. Enough of this; and now to the business of our meeting.—I trust you will hold it sufficient if I pass my word to you that the packet of which you were lately the bearer, was designed for my hands by George of Douglas!"

"Then," said the page, "is George of Douglas—"

"A true friend to his Queen, Roland; and will, I trust, have his eyes opened to the errors of his (misalled) church."

"But what is he to his father, and what to the Lady of Lochlinham, who has been as a mother to him?" said the page impatiently.

"The best friend to both, in time and through eternity," said the Abbot, "if he shall prove the happy instrument for redeeming the evil they have wrought, and are still working."

"Still," said the page, "I like not that good service which begins in breach of trust."

"I blame not thy scruples, my son," said the Abbot; "but the time which has wrenched asunder the allegiance of Christians to the church, and of subjects to their king, has dissolved all the lesser bonds of society; and, in such days, mere human ties must no more restrain our progress, than the brambles and briars which catch hold of his garments, should delay the path of a pilgrim who travels to pay his vows."

"But, my father,"—said the youth, and then stopt short in a hesitating manner.

"Speak on, my son," said the Abbot; "speak without fear."

"Let me not offend you then," said Roland, "when I say, that it is even this which our adversaries charge against us; when they say that, shaping the means according to the end, we are willing to commit great moral evil in order that we may work out eventual good."

"The heretics have played their usual arts on you, my son," said the Abbot; "they would willingly deprive us, of the power of acting wisely and secretly, though their possession of superior force forbids our contending with them on the terms of equality. They have reduced us to a state of exhausted weakness, and now would fain proscribe the means by which weakness, through all the range of nature, supplies the lack of strength, and defends itself against its potent enemies. As well might the hound say to the hare, use not these wily turns to escape me, but contend with me in pitched battle, as the armed and powerful heretic demand of the down-trodden and oppressed Catholic to lay aside the wisdom of the serpent, by which alone they may again hope to raise up the Jerusalem over which they weep, and which it is their duty to rebuild.—But more of this hereafter. And now, my son, I command thee on thy faith to tell me truly and particularly what has chanced to thee since we parted, and what is the present state of thy conscience. Thy relation, our sister Magdalen, is a woman of excellent gifts, blessed with a zeal which neither doubt nor danger can quench; but yet it is not a zeal altogether according to knowledge; wherefore, my son, I would willingly be myself thy interrogator and thy counsellor, in these days of darkness and stratagem."

With the respect which he owed to his first instructor, Roland Graeme went rapidly through the events which the reader is acquainted with; and while he disguised not from the prelate the impression which had been made on his mind by the arguments of the preacher Henderson, he accidentally and almost involuntarily, gave his Father Confessor to understand the influence which Catherine Seyton had acquired over his mind.

"It is with joy I discover my dearest son," replied the Abbot, "that I have arrived in time to arrest thee on the verge of the precipice to which thou wert approaching. Those doubts of which you complain, are the weeds which naturally grow up

in a strong soil, and require the careful hand of the husbandman to eradicate them. Thou must study a little volume, which I will impart to thee in fitting time, in which, by Our Lady's grace, I have placed in somewhat a clearer light than heretofore, the points debated betwixt us and these heretics, who sow among the wheat the same tares which were formerly privily mingled with the good seed by the Albigenes and the Lollards. But it is not by reason alone that you must hope to conquer these insinuations of the enemy: It is sometimes by timely resistance, but oftener by timely flight. You must shut your ears against the arguments of the heresiarch, when circumstances permit you not to withdraw the foot from his company. Anchor your thoughts upon the service of our Lady, while he is expending in vain his heretical sophistry. Are you unable to maintain your attention on heavenly objects—think rather on thine own earthly pleasures, than tempt Providence and the Saints by giving an attentive ear to the erring doctrine—think of thy hawk, thy hound, thine angling rod, thy spurs and buckler—think even of Catherine Seyton, rather than give thy soul to the lessons of the tempter. Alas! my son, believe not that, worn out with woes, and bent more by affliction than, by years, I have forgotten the effect of beauty over the heart of youth. Even in the watches of the night, broken by thoughts of an imprisoned Queen, a distracted kingdom, a church laid waste and ruinous, come other thoughts than those suggest, and feelings which belonged to an earlier and happier course of life. Be it so—we must bear our load, as we may; and not in vain are these passions implanted in our breast, since, as now in thy case, they may come in aid of resolutions founded upon higher grounds. Yet beware, my son—this Catherine Seyton is the daughter of one of Scotland's proudest, as well as most worthy barons; and thy state may not suffer thee, as yet, to aspire so high. But thus it is—Heaven works its purposes through human folly; and Douglas's ambitious affection, as well as thine, shall contribute alike to the desired end."

"How, my father," said the page, "my suspicions are then true!—Douglas loves—"

"He does; and with a love as much misplaced as thine own; but beware of him—cross him not—shew him not."

"Let him not cross or thwart me," said the page; "for I will not yield him an inch of way, had he in his body the soul of every Douglas that has lived since the time of the Dark Gray Man!"

"Nay, have patience, idle boy, and reflect that your suit can never interfere with his.—But a truce with these vanities, and let us better employ the little space which still remains to us to spend together. To thy knees, my son, and resume the long-interrupted duty of confession, that, happen what may, the hour may find in thee a faithful Catholic, relieved from the guilt of his sins by authority of the Holy Church. Could I but sell thee, Roland, the joy with which I see thee once more put thy knee to its best and fittest use! *Quid dicis, mi fili?*"

"*Quibus moris,*" answered the youth; and according to the ritual of the Catholic Church, he confessed and received absolution, to which was

annexed the condition of performing certain enjoined penances.

When this religious ceremony was ended, an old man, in the dress of a peasant of the better order, approached the arbour, and greeted the Abbot.—"I have waited the conclusion of your devotions," he said, "to tell you the youth is sought after by the chamberlain, and it were well he should appear without delay. Holy Saint Francis, if the halberdiers were to seek him here, they might sorely wrong my garden-plot—they are in office, and seek not where they tread, were each step on jessamine and clove-gillyflowers."

"We will speed him forth, my brother," said the Abbot; "but alas! is it possible that such trifles should live in your mind at a crisis so awful as that which is now impending?"

"Reverend father," answered the proprietor of the garden, for such he was, "how oft shall I pray you to keep your high counsel for high minds like your own! What have you required of me, that I have not granted unremotely, though with an aching heart?"

"I would require of you to be yourself, my brother," said the Abbot Ambrosius; "to remember what you were, and to what your early vows have bound you."

"I tell thee, Father Ambrosius," replied the gardener, "the patience of the best saint that ever said pater-noster, would be exhausted by the trials to which you have put mine—What I have been, it skills not to speak at present—no one knows better than yourself, father, what I renounced, in hopes to find ease and quiet during the remainder of my days—and no one better knows how my retreat has been invaded, my fruit-trees broken, my flower-beds trodden down, my quiet frightened away, and my very sleep driven from my bed, since ever this poor Queen, God bless her, hath been sent to Lochleven.—I blame her not; being a prisoner, it is natural she should wish to get out from so vile a hold, where there is scarcely any place even for a tolerable garden, and where the water-mists, as I am told, blight all the early blossoms—I say, I cannot blame her for endeavouring for her freedom; but why I should be drawn into the scheme—why my harmless arbours, that I planted with my own hands, should become places of privy conspiracy—why my little quay, which I built for my own fishing boat, should have become a haven for secret embarkations—in short, why I should be dragged into matters where both heading and hanging are like to be the issue, I profess to you, reverend father, I am totally ignorant."

"My brother," answered the Abbot, "you are wise, and ought to know—"

"I am not—I am not—I am not wise," replied the horticulturist, pettishly, and stopping this ears with his fingers—"I was never called wise, but when men wanted to engage me in some action of notorious folly."

"But, my good brother," said the Abbot—

"I am not good, neither," said the peevish gardener; "I am neither good nor wise—Had I been wise, you would not have been admitted here; and were I good, methinks I should send you elsewhere, to hatch plots for destroying the quiet of the country. What signifies disputing about queen or king, when men may sit at peace—*sed unde vides sui?* and so would I do, after the precept of

holy Writ, were I, as you term me, wise or good. But such as I am, my neck is in the yoke, and you make me draw what weight you list. — Follow me, youngster. This reverend father, who speaks in his jackman's dress nearly as reverend a figure as I myself, will agree with me in one thing at least, and that is, that you have been long enough here."

"Follow the good father, Roland!" said the Abbot, "and remember my words — a day is approaching that will try the temper of all true Scotsmen — may thy heart prove faithful as the steel of thy blade!"

The page bowed in silence, and they parted; the gardener, notwithstanding his advanced age, walking on before him very briskly, and muttering as he went, partly to himself, partly to his companion, after the manner of old men of weakened intellects — "When I was great," thus ran his maulering, "and had my mule and my ambling palfrey at command, I warrant you I could have as well flown through the air as have walked at this pace. I had my gout and my rheumatisms, and an hundred things besides, that hung fetters on my heels; and now, thanks to Our Lady, and honest labour, I can walk with any good man of my age in the kingdom of Fife — Fy upon it, that experience should be so long in coming!"

As he was thus muttering, his eye fell upon the branch of a pear-tree which drooped down for want of support, and at once forgetting his haste, the old man stopped and set seriously about binding it up. Roland Græme had both readiness, neatness of hand, and good nature in abundance; he immediately lent his aid, and in a minute or two the bough was supported, and tied up in a way perfectly satisfactory to the old man, who looked at it with great complaisance. "They are bergamots," he said, "and if you will come ashore in autumn, you shall taste of them — the like are not in Lochleven Castle — the garden there is a poor pin-fold, and the gardener, Hugh Houkham, hath little skill of his craft — so come ashore, Master Page, in autumn, when you would eat pears. But what am I thinking of — ere that time come, they may have given thee sour pears for plums. Take an old man's advice, youth, one who hath seen many days, and sat in higher places than thou canst hope for — bend thy sword into a pruning-hook, and make a dibble of thy dagger — thy days shall be the longer, and thy health the better for it, — and come to aid me in my garden, and I will teach thee the real French fashion of *imping*, which the Southron call *grafting*. Do this, and do it without loss of time, for there is a whirlwind coming over the land, and only those shall escape who lie too much beneath the storm to have their boughs broken by it."

So saying, he dismissed Roland Græme, through a different door from that by which he had entered, signed a cross, and pronounced a benediction as they parted, and then, still muttering to himself, retired into the garden, and locked the door on the inside.

CHAPTER XXIX.

Pray God she prove not masculine ere long!

King Henry VI.

Dismissed from the old man's garden, Roland Græme found that a grassy paddock, in which

sauntered two cows, the property of the gardener, still separated him from the village. He paced through it, lost in meditation upon the words of the Abbot. Father Ambrosius had, with success enough, exerted over him that powerful influence which the guardians and instructors of our childhood possess over our more mature youth. And yet, when Roland looked back upon what the father had said, he could not but suspect that he had rather sought to evade entering into the controversy betwixt the churches, than to repel the objections and satisfy the doubts which the lectures of Henderson had excited. "For this he had no time," said the page to himself, "neither have I now calmness and learning sufficient to judge upon points of such magnitude. Besides, it were base to quit my faith while the wind of fortune sets against it, unless I were so placed that my conversion, should it take place, were free as light from the imputation of self-interest. I was bred a Catholic — bred in the faith of Bruce and Wallace — I will hold that faith till time and reason shall convince me that it errs. I will serve this poor Queen as a subject should serve an imprisoned and wronged sovereign — they who placed me in her service have to blame themselves — who sent me hither, a gentleman trained in the paths of loyalty and honour, when they should have sought out some truckling, coggling, double-dealing knave, who would have been at once the observant page of the Queen, and the obsequious spy of her enemies. Since I must choose betwixt hiding and betraying her, I will decide as becomes her servant and her subject; but Catherine Seyton — Catherine Seyton, beloved by Douglas, and holding me on or off as the intervals of her leisure or caprice will permit — how shall I deal with the coquette! — By heaven, when I next have an opportunity, she shall render me some reason for her conduct, or I will break with her for ever!"

As he formed this doughty resolution, he crossed the stile which led out of the little enclosure, and was almost immediately greeted by Dr Luke Lundin.

"Ha! my most excellent young friend," said the Doctor, "from whence come you! — but I note the place. — Yes, neighbour Blinkhoolie's garden is a pleasant rendezvous, and you are of the age when lads look after a bonny lass with one eye, and a dainty plum with another. But hey! you look subtrist and melancholic — I fear the maiden has proved cruel, or the plums unripe; and surely, I think neighbour Blinkhoolie's damsons can scarcely have been well preserved throughout the winter — he spares the saccharine juice on his confects. But courage, man, there are more Kates in Kinross; and for the immature fruit, a glass of my double distilled *aqua mirabilis* — *probatum est*."

The page darted an ireful glance at the facetious physician; but presently recollecting that the name Kate, which had provoked his displeasure, was probably but introduced for the sake of alliteration, he suppressed his wrath, and only asked if the wains had been heard of!

"Why, I have been seeking for you this hour, to tell you that the stuff is in your boat, and that the boat waits your pleasure. Anchtetmucht had only fallen into company with an idle knave like himself, and a stoup of aquavite between them. Your boatmen lie on their oars, and there have already been made two wuffs from the warter's

furrow, to intimate that those in the castle are impatient for your return. Yet there is time for you to take a slight repast; and, as your friend and physician, I hold it unfit you should face the water-breeze with an empty stomach."

Roland Graeme had nothing for it but to return, with such cheer as he might, to the place where his boat was moored on the beach, and resisted all offer of refreshment, although the Doctor promised that he should prelude the collation with a gentle appetizer—a decoction of herbs, gathered and distilled by himself. Indeed, as Roland had not forgotten the contents of his morning cup, it is possible that the recollection induced him to stand firm in his refusal of all food, to which such an unpalatable preface was the preliminary. As they passed towards the boat, (for the ceremonious politeness of the worthy Chamberlain would not permit the page to go thither without attendance,) Roland Graeme, amidst a group who seemed to be assembled around a party of wandering musicians, distinguished, as he thought, the dress of Catherine Seyton. He shook himself clear from his attendant, and at one spring was in the midst of the crowd, and at the side of the damsel. "Catherine," he whispered, "is it well for you to be still here!—will you not return to the castle?"

"To the devil with your Catherine and your castles!" answered the maiden, snappishly; "have you not had time enough already to get rid of your follies! Begone! I desire not your farther company, and there will be danger in thrusting it upon me."

"Nay—but if there be danger, fairest Catherine," replied Roland, "why will you not allow me to stay and share it with you?"

"Intruding fool," said the maiden, "the danger is all on thine own side—the risk is, in plain terms, that I strike thee on the mouth with the hilt of my dagger." So saying, she turned haughtily from him, and moved through the crowd who gave way in some astonishment at the masculine activity with which she forced her way among them.

As Roland, though much irritated, prepared to follow, he was grappled on the other side by Doctor Luke Lundin, who reminded him of the loaded boat, of the two wests, or signals with the flag, which had been made from the tower, of the danger of the cold breeze to an empty stomach, and of the vanity of spending more time upon coy wenchings and pour plums. Roland was thus, in a manner, dragged back to his boat, and obliged to lanch her forth upon his return to Lochleven Castle.

That little voyage was speedily accomplished, and the page was greeted at the landing place by the severe and caustic welcome of old Dryfesdale. "So, young gallant, you are come at last, after a delay of six hours, and after two signals from the castle! But, I warrant, some idle junketing had occupied you too deeply to think of your service or your duty. Where is the note of the plate and household stuff!—Pray Heaven it hath not been diminished under the sleeveless care of so young a gad-about!"

"Diminished under my care, Sir Steward!" reported the page angrily; "ay so in earnest, and by Heaven your gray hair shall hardly protect your saucy tongue!"

"A truce with your swaggering, young esquire," returned the steward; "we have bolts and dun-

geons for brawlers. Go to my lady, and swagger before her, if thou darest—she will give thee proper cause of offence, for she has waited for thee long and impatiently."

"And where then is the Lady of Lochleven?" said the page; "for I conceive it is of her thou speakest."

"Ay—of whom else?" replied Dryfesdale; "or who besides the Lady of Lochleven hath a right to command in this castle?"

"The Lady of Lochleven is thy mistress," said Roland Graeme; "but mine is the Queen of Scotland."

The steward looked at him fixedly for assessment, with an air in which suspicion and dislike were ill concealed by an affectation of contempt. "The bragging cock-chicken," he said, "will betray himself by his rash crowing. I have marked thy altered manner in the chapel of late—ay, and your changing of glances at meal-time with a certain idle damsel, who, like thyself, laughs at all gravity and goodness. There is something about you, my master, which should be looked to. But, if you would know whether the Lady of Lochleven, or that other lady, hath right to command thy service, thou wilt find them together in the Lady Mary's anteroom."

Roland hastened thither, not unwilling to escape from the ill-natured penetration of the old man, and marvelling at the same time what peculiarity could have occasioned the Lady of Lochleven's being in the Queen's apartment at this time of the afternoon, so much contrary to her usual wont. His acuteness instantly penetrated the meaning. "She wishes," he concluded, "to see the meeting betwixt the Queen and me on my return, that she may form a guess whether there is any private intelligence or understanding betwixt us—I must be guarded."

With this resolution he entered the parlour, where the Queen, seated in her chair, with the Lady Fleming leaning upon the back of it, had already kept the Lady of Lochleven standing in her presence for the space of nearly an hour, to the manifest increase of her very visible bad humour. Roland Graeme, on entering the apartment, made a deep obeisance to the Queen, and another to the Lady, and then stood still as if to await their farther question. Speaking almost together, the Lady Lochleven said, "So, young man, you are returned at length!"

And then stopped indignantly short, while the Queen went on without regarding her—"Roland, you are welcome home to us—you have proved the true dove and not the raven—Yet I am sure I could have forgiven you, if, once dismissed from this water-clored ark of ours, you had never again returned to us. I trust you have brought back an olive branch, for our kind and worthy hostess has chafed herself much on account of your long absence, and we never needed more some symbol of peace and reconciliation."

"I grieve I should have been detained, madam," answered the page; "but from the delay of the person intrusted with the matters for which I was sent, I did not receive them till late in the day."

"See you there now," said the Queen to the Lady Lochleven; "we could not persuade you, our dearest hostess, that your household goods were in all safe keeping and surety. True it is, that we can excuse your anxiety, considering that these august apartments are so scantily furnished, that we have

not been able to offer you even the relief of a stool during the long time you have afforded us the pleasure of your society."

"The will, madam," said the lady, "the will it offer such accommodation was more wanting than the means."

"What!" said the Queen, looking round, and affecting surprise, "there are then stools in this apartment—one, two—no less than four, including the broken one!—a royal garniture!—We observed them not—will it please your ladyship to sit?"

"No, madam, I will soon relieve you of my presence," replied the Lady Lochleven; "and while with you, my aged limbs can still better brook fatigue, than my mind stoop to accept of constrained courtesy."

"Nay, Lady of Lochleven, if you take it so deeply," said the Queen, rising and motioning to her own vacant chair, "I would rather you assumed my seat—you are not the first of your family who has done so."

The Lady of Lochleven curtsied a negative, but seemed with much difficulty to suppress the angry answer which rose to her lips.

During this sharp conversation, the page's attention had been almost entirely occupied by the entrance of Catherine Seyton, who came from the inner apartment, in the usual dress in which she attended upon the Queen, and with nothing in her manner which marked either the hurry or confusion incident to a hasty change of disguise, or the conscious fear of detection in a perilous enterprise. Roland Græme ventured to make her an obeisance as she entered, but she returned it with an air of the utmost indifference; which, in his opinion, was extremely inconsistent with the circumstances in which they stood towards each other.—"Surely," he thought, "she cannot in reason expect to bully me out of the belief due to mine own eyes, as she tried to do concerning the apparition in the hostelry of Saint Michael's—I will try if I cannot make her feel that this will be but a vain task, and that confidence in me is the wiser and safer course to pursue."

These thoughts had passed rapidly through his mind, when the Queen, having finished her altercation with the Lady of the castle, again addressed him.—"What of the revels at Kinross, Roland Græme? Methought they were gay, if I may judge from some faint sounds of mirth and distant music, which found their way so far as these grated windows, and died when they entered them, as all that is mirthful must.—But thou lookest as sad as if thou hadst come from a conventicle of the Huguenots!"

"And so perchance he hath, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, at whom this side-shaft was launched. "I trust, amid yonder idle fooleries, there wanted not some pouring forth of doctrine to a better purpose than that vain mirth, which, blazing and vanishing like the crackling of dry thorns, leaves to the fools who love it nothing but dust and ashes."

"Mary Fleming," said the Queen, turning round and drawing her mantle about her, "I would that we had the chimney-grate supplied with a fagot or two of these same thorns which the Lady of Lochleven describes so well. Methinks the damp air from the lake, which stagnates in these vaulted rooms, renders them deadly cold."

"Your Grace's pleasure shall be obeyed," said the Lady of Lochleven; "yet may I presume to remind you that we are now in summer!"

"I thank you for the information, my good lady," said the Queen; "for prisoners better learn their calendar from the mouth of their jailor, than from any change they themselves feel in the seasons.—Once more, Roland Græme, what of the revels?"

"They were gay, madam," said the page, "but of the usual sort, and little worth your Highness's ear."

"Oh, you know not," said the Queen, "how very indulgent my ear has become to all that speaks of freedom and the pleasures of the free. Methinks I would rather have seen the gay villagers dance their ring round the Maypole, than have witnessed the most stately masques within the precincts of a palace. The absence of stone-wall—the sense that the green turf is under the foot which may tread it free and unrestrained, is worth all that art or splendour can add to more courtly revels."

"I trust," said the Lady Lochleven, addressing the page in her turn, "there were amongst these follies none of the riots or disturbances to which they so naturally lead?"

Roland gave a slight glance to Catherine Seyton, as if to bespeak her attention, as he replied,—"I witnessed no offence, madam, worthy of marking—none indeed of any kind, save that a bold damsel made her hand somewhat too familiar with the cheek of a player-man, and ran some hazard of being ducked in the lake."

As he uttered these words he cast a hasty glance at Catherine; but she sustained, with the utmost serenity of manner and countenance, the hint which he had deemed could not have been thrown out before her without exciting some fear and confusion.

"I will cumble your Grace no longer with my presence," said the Lady Lochleven, "unless you have ought to command me."

"Nought, our good hostess," answered the Queen, "unless it be to pray you, that on another occasion you deem it not needful to postpone your better employment to wait so long upon us."

"May it please you," added the Lady Lochleven, "to command this your gentleman to attend us, that I may receive some account of these matters which have been sent hither for your Grace's use?"

"We may not refuse what you are pleased to require, madam," answered the Queen. "Go with the lady, Roland, if our commands be indeed necessary to thy doing so. We will hear to-morrow the history of thy Kinross pleasures. For this night we dismiss thy attendance."

Roland Græme went with the Lady of Lochleven, who failed not to ask him many questions concerning what had passed at the sports, to which he rendered such answers as were most likely to lull asleep any suspicions which she might entertain of his disposition to favour Queen Mary, taking especial care to avoid all allusion to the apparition of Magdalen Græme, and of the Abbot Arbroath. At length, after undergoing a long and somewhat close examination, he was dismissed with such expressions, as, coming from the reserved and stern Lady of Lochleven, might seem to express a degree of favour and countenance.

His first care was to obtain some refreshment, which was more cheerfully afforded him by a good-natured painter than by Dryadale, who was, on

this occasion, much disposed to abide by the fashion of Pudding-burn House, where

They who came not the first day,
Gat no more meat till the next day.

When Roland Græme had finished his repast, having his dismissal from the Queen for the evening, and being little inclined for such society as the castle afforded, he stole into the garden, in which he had permission to spend his leisure time, when it pleased him. In this place, the ingenuity of the contriver and disposer of the walks had exerted itself to make the most of little space, and by screens, both of stone ornamented with rude sculpture, and hedges of living green, had endeavoured to give as much intricacy and variety as the confined limits of the garden would admit.

Here the young man walked sadly, considering the events of the day, and comparing what had dropped from the Abbot with what he had himself noticed of the demeanour of George Douglas. "It must be so," was the painful but inevitable conclusion at which he arrived. "It must be by his aid that she is thus enabled, like a phantom, to transport herself from place to place, and to appear at pleasure on the mainland or on the islet. — It must be so," he repeated once more; "with King she holds a close, secret, and intimate correspondence, altogether inconsistent with the eye of favour which she has sometimes cast upon me, and destructive to the hopes which she must have known these glances have necessarily inspired." And, yet (for love will hope where reason despairs) the thought rushed on his mind, that it was possible she only encouraged Douglas's passion so far as might serve her mistress's interest, and that she was of too frank, noble, and candid a nature, to hold out to himself hopes which she meant not to fulfil. Lost in these various conjectures, he seated himself upon a bank of turf which commanded a view of the lake on the one side, and on the other of that front of the castle along which the Queen's apartments were situated.

The sun had now for some time set, and the twilight of May was rapidly fading into a serene night. On the lake, the expanded water rose and fell, with the slightest and softest influence of a southern breeze, which scarcely dimpled the surface over which it passed. In the distance was still seen the dim outline of the island of Saint Serf, once visited by many a sandalled pilgrim, as the blessed spot gradden by a man of God — now neglected or violated as the refuge of lazy priests, who had with justice been compelled to give place to the sheep and the heifers of a Protestant baron.

As Roland gazed on the dark speck, amid the lighter blue of the waters which surrounded it, the mazes of polemical discussion again stretched themselves before the eye of his mind. Had these men justly suffered their exile as licentious drones, the robbers, at once, and disgrace, of the busy hive! or had the hand of avarice and rapine expelled from the temple, not the ribalds who polluted, but the faithful priests who served the shrine in honour and fidelity! The arguments of Henderson, in this contemplative hour, rose with double force before him, and could scarcely be parried by the appeal which the Abbot ambrosius had made from his understanding to his feelings, — an appeal which he had felt more forcibly amid the bustle of stirring life, than now when his reflections were more undisturbed. It required an effort to divert his mind

from this embarrassing topic; and he found that he had succeeded by turning his eyes to the front of the tower, watching where a twinkling light still streamed from the casement of Catherine Seyton's apartment, obscured by times for a moment, as the shadows of the fair inhabitant passed betwixt the taper and the window. At length the light was removed or extinguished, and that object of speculation was also withdrawn from the eyes of the meditative lover. Dare I confess the fact, without injuring his character for ever as a hero of romance? These eyes gradually became heavy; speculative doubts on the subject of religious controversy, and anxious conjectures concerning the state of his mistress's affections, became confusedly blended together in his musings; the fatigues of a busy day prevailed over the harassing subjects of contemplation which occupied his mind, and he fell fast asleep.

Sound were his slumbers, until they were suddenly dispelled by the iron tongue of the castle bell, which sent its deep and sullen sounds wide over the bosom of the lake, and awakened the echoes of Bannarty, the hill which descends steeply on its southern bank. Roland started up, for this bell was always tolled at ten o'clock, as the signal for locking the castle gates, and placing the keys under the charge of the seneschal. He therefore hastened to the wicket by which the garden communicated with the building, and had the mortification, just as he reached it, to hear the bolt leave its sheath with a discordant crash, and enter the stone groove of the door-lintel.

"Hold, hold," cried the page, "and let me in ere you lock the wicket."

The voice of Dryfesdale replied from within, in his usual tone of imbibed sullenness, "The hour is passed, fair master — you like not the inside of these walls — even make it a complete holiday, and spend the night as well as the day out of bounds."

"Open the door," exclaimed the indignant page, "or by Saint Giles I will make thy gold chain smoke for it!"

"Make no alarm here," retorted the impenetrable Dryfesdale, "but keep thy sinful oaths and silly threats for those that regard them — I do mine office, and carry the keys to the seneschal. — A dieu, my young master! the cool night air will advantage your hot blood."

The steward was right in what he said; for the cooling breeze was very necessary to appease the feverish fit of anger which Roland experienced, nor did the remedy succeed for some time. At length, after some hasty turns made through the garden, exhausting his passion in vain vows of vengeance, Roland Græme began to be sensible that his situation ought rather to be held as matter of laughter than of serious resentment. To one bred a sportsman, a night spent in the open air had in it little of hardship, and the poor malice of the steward seemed more worthy of his contempt than his anger. "I would to God," he said, "that the grim old man may always have contented himself with such sportive revenge. He often looks as he were capable of doing us a darker turn." Returning, therefore, to the turf-seat which he had formerly occupied, and which was partially sheltered by a trim fence of green holly, he drew his mantle around him, stretched himself at length on the verdant settle, and endeavoured to resume that sleep which the castle bell had interrupted to no little purpose.

Sleep, like other earthly blessings, is niggard of its favours when most courted. The more Roland invoked her aid, the farther she fled from his eyelids. He had been completely awakened, first, by the sounds of the bell, and then by his own aroused vivacity of temper, and he found it difficult again to compose himself to slumber. At length, when his mind was wearied out with a maze of unpleasant meditation, he succeeded in coaxing himself into a broken slumber. This was again dispelled by the voices of two persons who were walking in the garden, the sound of whose conversation, after mingling for some time in the page's dreams, at length succeeded in awaking him thoroughly. He raised himself from his reclining posture in the utmost astonishment, which the circumstance of hearing two persons at that late hour conversing on the outside of the watchfully guarded Castle of Lochleven, was so well calculated to excite. His first thought was of supernatural beings; his next, upon some attempt on the part of Queen Mary's friends and followers; his last was, that George of Douglas, possessed of the keys, and having the means of ingress and egress at pleasure, was availing himself of his office to hold a rendezvous with Catherine Seyton in the castle garden. He was confirmed in this opinion by the tone of the voice, which asked in a low whisper, "whether all was ready?"

CHAPTER. XXX.

In some breast passion lies conceal'd and silent,
Like war's swart powder in a castle vault.
Until occasion, like the linetock, lights it:
Then comes at once the lightning and the thunder,
And distant echoes tell that all is rent asunder.
Old Play.

ROLAND GRAME, availing himself of a breach in the holy screen, and of the assistance of the full moon, which was now arisen, had a perfect opportunity, himself unobserved, to reconnoitre the persons and the motions of those by whom his rest had been thus unexpectedly disturbed; and his observations confirmed his jealous apprehensions. They stood together in close and earnest conversation within four yards of the place of his retreat, and he could easily recognize the tall form and deep voice of Douglas, and the no less remarkable dress and tone of the page at the hostelry of Saint Michael's.

"I have been at the door of the page's apartment," said Douglas, "but he is not there, or he will not answer. It is fast bolted on the inside, as is the custom, and we cannot pass through it,—and what his silence may bode I know not."

"You have trusted him too far," said the other; "a feather-headed cockcomb, upon whose changeable mind and hot brain there is no making an abiding impression."

"It was not I who was willing to trust him," said Douglas; "but I was assured he would prove friendly when called upon—for——" Here he spoke so low that Roland lost the tenor of his words, which was the more provoking, as he was fully aware that he was himself the subject of their conversation.

"Nay," replied the stranger, more aloud, "I have on my side put him off with fair words, which make fools vain—but now, if you distrust him at the peak,

deal with him with your dagger, and so make open passage."

"That were too rash," said Douglas; "and, besides, as I told you, the door of his apartment is shut and bolted. I will essay again to awaken him."

Grame instantly comprehended, that the ladies, having been somehow made aware of his being in the garden, had secured the door of the outer room in which he usually slept, as a sort of sentinel upon that only access to the Queen's apartments. But then, how came Catherine Seyton to be abroad, if the Queen and the other lady were still within their chambers, and the access to them locked and bolted!—"I will be instantly at the bottom of these mysteries," he said, "and then thank Mistress Catherine, if this be really she, for the kind use which she exhorted Douglas to make of his dagger—they seek me, as I comprehend, and they shall not seek me in vain."

Douglas had by this time re-entered the castle by the wicket, which was now open. The stranger stood alone in the garden walk, his arms folded on his breast, and his eyes cast impatiently up to the moon, as if accusing her of betraying him by the magnificence of her lustre. In a moment Roland Grame stood before him—"A goodly night," he said, "Mistress Catherine, for a young lady to stray forth in disguise, and to meet with men in an orchard!"

"Hush!" said the stranger page, "hush, thou foolish patch, and tell us in a word if thou art friend or foe."

"How should I be friend to one who deceives me by fair words, and who would have Douglas deal with me with his poniard?" replied Roland.

"The fiend receive George of Douglas and thee too, thou born madcap and sworn marplot!" said the other; "we shall be discovered, and then death is the word."

"Catherine," said the page, "you have dealt falsely and cruelly with me, and the moment of explanation is now come—either it nor you shall escape me."

"Madman!" said the stranger, "I am neither Kate nor Catherine—the moon shines bright enough surely to know the hart from the hind."

"That shift shall not serve you, fair mistress," said the page, laying hold on the lap of the stranger's cloak; "this time, at least, I will know with whom I deal."

"Unhand me," said she, endeavouring to extricate herself from his grasp; and in a tone where anger seemed to contend with a desire to laugh, "use you so little discretion towards a daughter of Seyton!"

But as Roland, encouraged perhaps by her risibility to suppose his violence was not unparadoxically offensive, kept hold on her mantle, she said, in a sterner tone of unmixed resentment,—“Madman, let me go!—there is life and death in this moment—I would not willingly hurt thee, and yet beware!”

As she spoke she made a sudden effort to escape, and in doing so, a pistol, which she carried in her hand or about her person, went off.

This warlike sound instantly awakened the well-warded castle. The warder blew his horn, and began to toll the castle bell, crying out at the same time, “Fire! treason! treason! cry all! cry all!”

The apparition of Catherine Seyton, which the page had let loose in the first moment of astonishment, vanished in darkness, but the pluck of ears

was heard, and in a second or two, five or six harquebusses and a falconet were fired from the battlements of the castle successively, as if levelled at some object on the water. Confounded with these incidents, no way for Catherine's protection (supposing her to be in the boat which he had heard put from the shore) occurred to Roland, save to have recourse to George of Douglas. He hastened for this purpose towards the apartment of the Queen, whence he heard loud voices and much tramping of feet. When he entered, he found himself added to a confused and astonished group, which, assembled in that apartment, stood gazing upon each other. At the upper end of the room stood the Queen, equipped as for a journey, and attended not only by the Lady Fleming, but by the omnipresent Catherine Seyton, dressed in the habit of her own sex, and bearing in her hand the casket in which Mary kept such jewels as she had been permitted to retain. At the other end of the hall was the Lady of Lochleven, hastily dressed, as one startled from slumber by the sudden alarm, and surrounded by domestics, some bearing torches, others holding naked swords, pikes, pistols, or such other weapons as they had caught up in the hurry of a night alarm. Betwixt these two parties stood George of Douglas, his arms folded on his breast, his eyes bent on the ground, like a criminal who knows not how to deny, yet continues unwilling to avow, the guilt in which he has been detected.

"Speak, George of Douglas," said the Lady of Lochleven; "speak, and clear the horrid suspicion which rests on thy name. Say, 'A Douglas was never faithless to his trust, and I am a Douglas.' Say this, my dearest son; and it is all I ask thee to say to clear thy name, even under such a foul charge. Say it was but the wife of these unhappy women, and this false boy, which plotted an escape so fatal to Scotland—so destructive to thy father's house."

"Madam," said old Dryfesdale the steward, "this much do I say for this silly page, that he could not be necessary to unlocking the doors, since I myself this night bolted him out of the castle. Whosoever limned this nightpiece, the lad's share in it seems to have been small."

"Thou liest, Dryfesdale," said the Lady, "and wouldst throw the blame on thy master's house, to save the worthless life of a gipsy boy."

"His death were more desirable to me than his life," answered the steward sullenly; "but 'the truth is the truth.'"

At these words Douglas raised his head, drew up his figure to its full height, and spoke boldly and sedately, as one whose resolution was taken. "Let no life be endangered for me. I alone —"

"Douglas," said the Queen, interrupting him, "art thou mad? Speak not I charge you."

"Madam," he replied, bowing with the deepest respect, "gladly would I obey your commands, but they must have a victim, and let it be the true one. — Yes, madam," he continued, addressing the Lady of Lochleven, "I alone am guilty in this matter. If the word of a Douglas has yet any weight with you, believe me that this boy is innocent; and on your conscience I charge you, do him no wrong; nor let the Queen suffer hardship for embracing the opportunity of freedom which sincere loyalty — which a sentiment yet deeper — offered to her acceptance. Yes! I had planned the escape of the

most beautiful, the most persecuted of women; and far from regretting that I, for a while, deceived the malice of her enemies, I glory in it, and am most willing to yield up life itself in her cause."

"Now may God have compassion on my age," said the Lady of Lochleven, "and enable me to bear this load of affliction! O Princess, born in a luckless hour, when will you cease to be the instrument of seduction and of ruin to all who approach you! O ancient house of Lochleven, famed so long for birth and honour, evil was the hour which brought the deceiver under thy roof!"

"Say not so, madam," replied her grandson; "the old honours of the Douglas line will be outshone, when one of its descendants dies for the most injured of queens—for the most lovely of women."

"Douglas," said the Queen, "must I at this moment—ay even at this moment, when I may lose a faithful subject for ever, chide thee for forgetting what is due to me as thy Queen?"

"Wretched boy," said the distracted Lady of Lochleven, "hast thou fallen even thus far into the snare of this Moabitish woman!—hast thou bartered thy name, thy allegiance, thy knightly oath, thy duty to thy parents, thy country, and thy God, for a fawning tear, or a sickly smile, from lips which flattered the infirm Francis—lured to death the idiot Darnley—read lascivious poetry with the minion Chastelar—mingled in the lays of love which were sung by the beggar Rizzio—and which were joined in rapture to those of the foul and licentious Bothwell?"

"Blaspheme not, madam!" said Douglas;—"nor you, fair Queen, and virtuous as fair, chide at this moment the presumption of thy vassal!—Think not that the mere devotion of a subject could have moved me to the part I have been performing. Well you deserve that each of your lieges should die for you; but I have done more—have done that to which love alone could compel a Douglas—I have dissembled. Farewell, then, Queen of all hearts, and Empress of that of Douglas!—When you are freed from this vile bondage—as freed you shall be, if justice reigns in Heaven—and when you load with honours and titles the happy man who shall deliver you, cast one thought on him whose heart would have despised every reward for a kiss of your hand—cast one thought on his fidelity, and drop one tear on his grave." And throwing himself at his feet, he seized her hand, and pressed it to his lips.

"This before my face!" exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven—"wilt thou court thy adulterous paramour before the eyes of a parent!—Tear them asunder, and put him under strict ward! Seize him, upon your lives!" she added, seeing that her attendants looked on each other with hesitation.

"They are doubtful," said Mary. "Save thyself, Douglas, I command thee!"

He started up from the floor, and only exclaiming, "My life or death are yours and at your disposal!"—drew his sword, and broke through those who stood betwixt him and the door. The enthusiasm of his onset was too sudden and too lively to have been opposed by any thing short of the most decided opposition; and as he was both loved and feared by his father's vassals, none of them would offer him actual injury.

The Lady of Lochleven stood astonished at his

sudden escape — "Am I surrounded," she said, "by traitors! Upon him, villains! — pursue, stab, cut him down!"

"He cannot leave the island, madam," said Dryfesdale, interfering; "I have the key of the boat-chain."

But two or three voices of those who pursued from curiosity, or command of their mistress, exclaimed from below, that he had cast himself into the lake.

"Brave Douglas still!" exclaimed the Queen — "Oh, true and noble heart, that prefers death to imprisonment!"

"Fire upon him!" said the Lady of Lochleven; "if there be here a true servant of his father, let him shoot the runaway dead, and let the lake cover our shame!"

The report of a gun or two was heard, but they were probably shot rather to obey the Lady, than with any purpose of hitting the mark; and Randal immediately entering, said that Master George had been taken up by a boat from the castle, which lay at a little distance.

"Man a barge, and pursue them!" said the Lady.

"It were quite vain," said Randal; "by this time they are half way to shore, and a cloud has come over the moon."

"And has the traitor then escaped!" said the Lady, pressing her hands against her forehead with a gesture of despair; "the honour of our house is for ever gone, and all will be deemed accomplices in this base treachery."

"Lady of Lochleven," said Mary, advancing towards her, "you have this night cut off my fairest hopes — You have turned my expected freedom into bondage, and dashed away the cup of joy in the very instant I was advancing it to my lips — and yet I feel for your sorrow the pity that you deny to mine — Gladly would I comfort you if I might; but as I may not, I would at least part from you in charity."

"Away, proud woman!" said the Lady; "who ever knew so well as thou to deal the deepest wounds under the pretence of kindness and courtesy! — Who, since the great traitor, could ever so betray with a kiss?"

"Lady Douglas of Lochleven," said the Queen, "in this moment thou canst not offend me — no, not even by thy coarse and unwomanly language, held to me in the presence of menials and armed retainers. I have this night owed so much to one member of the house of Lochleven, as to cancel whatever its mistress can do or say in the wildness of her passion."

"We are bounden to you, Princess," said Lady Lochleven, putting a strong constraint on herself, and passing from her tone of violence to that of bitter irony; "our poor house hath been but seldom graced with royal smiles, and will hardly, with my choice, exchange their rough honesty for such court-honour as Mary of Scotland has now to bestow."

"They," replied Mary, "who knew so well how to take, may think themselves excused from the obligation implied in receiving. And that I have now little to offer, is the fault of the Douglasses and their allies."

"Fear nothing, madam," replied the Lady of Lochleven, in the same bitter tone, "you remain an outcast which neither your own prodigality can

drain, nor your offended country deprive you of. While you have fair words and delusive smiles at command, you need no other bribes to lure youth to folly."

The Queen cast not an ungratified glance on a large mirror, which, hanging on one side of the apartment, and illuminated by the torch-light, reflected her beautiful face and person. "Our hostess grows complaisant," she said, "my Fleming; we had not thought that grief and captivity had left us so well stored with that sort of wealth which ladies prize most dearly."

"Your Grace will drive, this severe woman frantic," said Fleming, in a low tone. "On my knees I implore you to remember she is already dreadfully offended, and that we are in her power."

"I will not spare her, Fleming," answered the Queen; "it is against my nature. She returned my honest sympathy with insult and abuse, and I will gail her in return — if her words are too blunt for answer, let her use her poniard if she dare!"

"The Lady Lochleven," said the Lady Fleming aloud, "would surely do well now to withdraw, and to leave her Grace to repose."

"Ay," replied the Lady, "or to leave her Grace, and her Grace's minions, to think what silly fly they may next wrap their meshes about. My eldest son is a widower — were he not more worthy the flattering hopes with which you have seduced his brother! — True, the yoke of marriage has been already thrice fitted on — but the church of Rome calls it a sacrament, and its votaries may deem it one in which they cannot too often participate."

"And the votaries of the church of Geneva," replied Mary, colouring with indignation, "as they deem marriage so sacrament, are said at times to dispense with the holy ceremony." — Then, as if afraid of the consequences of this home allusion to the errors of Lady Lochleven's early life, the Queen added, "Come, my Fleming, we grace her too much by this alteration; we will to our sleeping apartment. If she would disturb us again to-night, she must cause the door to be forced." So saying, she retired to her bedroom, followed by her two women.

Lady Lochleven, stunned as it were by this last sarcasm, and not the less deeply incensed that she had drawn it upon herself, remained like a statue on the spot which she had occupied when she received an affront so flagrant. Dryfesdale and Randal endeavoured to rouse her to recollection by questions.

"What is your honourable Ladyship's pleasure in the premises?"

"Shall we not double the sentinels, and place one upon the boats and another in the garden?" said Randal.

"Would you that despatches were sent to Sir William at Edinburgh, to acquaint him with what has happened?" demanded Dryfesdale; "and ought not the place of Kinross to be alarmed, lest there be force upon the shores of the lake?"

"Do all as thou wilt," said the Lady, collecting herself, and about to depart. "Thou hast the name of a good soldier, Dryfesdale, take all precautions. — Sacred Heaven! that I should be thus openly insulted!"

"Would it be your pleasure," said Dryfesdale, hesitating, "that this person — this Lady — be more severely restrained?"

"No, vassal!" answered the Lady, indignantly, "my revenge stoops not to so low a gratification. But I will have more worthy vengeance, or the tomb of my ancestors shall cover my shame!"

"And you shall have it, madam," replied Dryfesdale—"Ere two suns go down, you shall term yourself amply revenged."

The Lady made no answer—perhaps did not hear his words, as she presently left the apartment. By the command of Dryfesdale, the rest of the attendants were dismissed, some to do the duty of guard, others to their repose. The steward himself remained after they had all departed; and Roland Græme, who was alone in the apartment, was surprised to see the old soldier advance towards him with an air of greater cordiality than he had ever before assumed to him, but which sat ill on his scowling features.

"Youth," he said, "I have done thee some wrong—it is thine own fault, for thy behaviour hath seemed as light to me as the feather thou wearest in thy hat; and surely thy fantastic apparel, and idle humour of mirth and folly, have made me construe thee something harshly. But I saw this night from my casement, (as I looked out to see how thou hadst disposed of thyself in the garden,) I saw, I say, the true efforts which thou didst make to detain the companion of the perfidy of him who is no longer worthy to be called by his father's name, but must be cut off from his house like a rotten branch. I was just about to come to thy assistance when the pistol went off; and the wagger (a false knave, whom I suspect to be bribed for the nonce) saw himself forced to give the alarm, which, perchance, till then he had wilfully withheld. To atone, therefore, for my injustice towards you, I would willingly render you a courtesy, if you would accept of it from my hands."

"May I first crave to know what it is?" replied the page.

"Simply to carry the news of this discovery to Holyrood, where thou mayest do thyself much grace, as well with the Earl of Morton and the Regent himself, as with Sir William Douglas, seeing thou hast seen the matter from end to end, and borne faithful part therein. The making thine own fortune will be thus lodged in thine own hand, when I trust thou wilt estrange thyself from foolish vanities, and learn to walk in this world as one who thinks upon the next."

"Sir Steward," said Roland Græme, "I thank you for your courtesy, but I may not do your errand. I pass that I am the Queen's sworn servant, and may not be of counsel against her. But, setting this apart, methinks it were a bad road to Sir William of Lochleven's favour, to be the first to tell him of his son's defection—neither would the Regent be over well pleased to hear the infidelity of his vassal, nor Morton to learn the falsehood of his kinsman."

"Um!" said the steward, making that inarticulate sound which expresses surprise mingled with displeasure. "Nay, then, even fly where ye list; for, giddy-pated as ye may be, you know how to bear you in the world."

"I will show you my esteem to be as selfish than ye think for," said the page; "for I hold truth and mirth to be better than gravity and cunning—ay, and in the end to be a match for them.—You never loved me less, Sir Steward, than you do at

this moment. I know you will give me no true confidence, and I am resolved to accept no false protestations as current coin. Resume your old course—suspect me as much and watch me as closely as you will, I bid you defiance—you have met with your match."

"By Heaven, young man," said the steward, with a look of bitter malignity, "if thou darest to attempt any treachery towards the House of Lochleven, thy head shall blacken in the sun from the warder's turret!"

"He cannot commit treachery who refuses trust," said the page; "and for my head, it stands as securely on my shoulders, as on any turret that ever mason built."

"Farewell, thou prating and speckled pie," said Dryfesdale, "that art so vain of thine idle tongue and variegated coat! Beware trap and lime-twig."

"And fare thee well, thou hoarse old raven," answered the page; "thy solemn flight, sable hue, and deep croak, are no charms against bird-bolt or hail-shot, and that thou mayst find—it is open war betwixt us, each for the cause of our mistress, and God shew the right!"

"Amen! and defend his own people!" said the steward. "I will let my mistress know what addition thou hast made to this mass of traitors. Good-night, Monsieur Featherpaté."

"Good-night, Seigneur Sowersby," replied the page; and, when the old man departed, he betook himself to rest.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Poison'd—ill fare!—dead, forsook, cast off!

Kings John.

HOWEVER weary Roland Græme might be of the Castle of Lochleven—however much he might wish that the plan for Mary's escape had been perfected, I question if he ever awoke with more pleasing feelings than on the morning after George Douglas's plan for accomplishing her deliverance had been frustrated. In the first place, he had the clearest conviction that he had misunderstood the innuendo of the Abbot, and that the affection of Douglas were fixed, not on Catherine Seyton, but on the Queen; and in the second place, from the sort of explanation which had taken place betwixt the steward and him, he felt himself at liberty, without any breach of honour towards the family of Lochleven, to contribute his best aid to any scheme, which should in future be formed for the Queen's escape; and, independently of the goodwill which he himself had to the enterprise, he knew he could find no surer road to the favour of Catherine Seyton. He now sought but an opportunity to inform her that he had dedicated himself to this task, and fortune was propitious in affording him one which was unusually favourable.

At the ordinary hour of breakfast, it was introduced by the steward with his usual forms, who, as soon as it was placed on the board in the inner apartment, said to Roland Græme, with a glance of sarcastic import, "I leave you, my young sir, to do the office of sewer—it has been too long rendered to the Lady Mary by one belonging to the house of Douglas."

"Were it the prime and principal who ever bore the name," said Roland, "the office were an honour to him."

The steward departed without replying to this bravado, otherwise than by a dark look of scorn. Grame, thus left alone, busied himself as one engaged in a labour of love, to imitate, as well as he could, the grace and courtesy with which George of Douglas was wont to render his ceremonial service at meals to the Queen of Scotland. There was more than youthful vanity—there was a generous devotion in the feeling with which he took up the task, as a brave soldier assumes the place of a comrade who has fallen in the front of battle. "I am now," he said, "their only champion; and, come weal, come woe, I will be, to the best of my skill and power, as faithful, as trustworthy, as brave, as any Douglas of them all could have been."

At this moment Catherine Seyton entered alone, contrary to her custom; and not less contrary to her custom, she entered with her kerchief at her eyes. Roland Grame approached her with beating heart and with downcast eyes, and asked her in a low and hesitating voice, whether the Queen were well!

"Can you suppose it?" said Catherine. "Think you her heart and body are framed of steel and iron, to endure the cruel disappointment of yester even, and the infamous taunts of yonder puritanic hag!—Would to God that I were a man, to aid her more effectually!"

"If those who carry pistols, and batons, and poniards," said the page, "are not men, they are at least Amazons; and that is as formidable."

"You are welcome to the flash of your wit, sir," replied the damsel; "I am neither in spirits to enjoy, nor to reply to it."

"Well, then," said the page, "list to me in all serious truth. And, first, let me say, that the gear last night had been smoother, had you taken me into your counsels."

"And so we meant; but who could have guessed that Master Page should choose to pass all night in the garden, like some moon-stricken knight in a Spanish romance—instead of being in his bedroom, when Douglas came to hold communication with him on our project?"

"And why," said the page, "defer to so late a moment so important a confidence?"

"Because your communications with Henderson, and—with pardon—the natural impetuosity and fickleness of your disposition, made us dread to intrust you with a secret of such consequence, till the last moment?"

"And why at the last moment?" said the page, offended at this frank avowal; "why at that, or any other moment, since I had the misfortune, to incur so much suspicion?"

"Nay—now you are angry again," said Catherine; "and to serve you right I should break off this talk; but I will be magnanimous, and answer your question. Know, then, our reason for trusting you was twofold. In the first place, we could scarce avoid it, since you slept in the room through which we had to pass. In the second place—"

"Nay," said the page, "you may dispense with a second reason, when the first makes your confidence in me a case of necessity."

"Good now, hold thy peace," said Catherine. "In the second place, as I said before, there is one

foolish person among us, who believes that Roland Grame's heart is warm; though his head is giddy—that his blood is pure, though it boils too hastily—and that his faith and honour are true as the load-star, though his tongue sometimes is far less than discreet."

This avowal Catherine repeated in a low tone, with her eyes fixed on the floor, as if she shunned the glance of Roland while she suffered it to escape her lips—"And this single friend," exclaimed the youth in rapture; "this only one who would do justice to the poor Roland Grame, and whose own generous heart taught her to distinguish between follies of the brain and faults of the heart—Will you not tell me, dearest Catherine, to whom I owe my most grateful, my most heartfelt thanks?"

"Nay," said Catherine, with her eyes still fixed on the ground, "if your own heart tell you not—"

"Dearest Catherine!" said the page, seizing upon her hand, and kneeling on one knee.

"If your own heart, I say, tell you not," said Catherine, gently disengaging her hand, "it is very ungrateful; for since the maternal kindness of the Lady Fleming—"

The page started on his feet. "By Heaven, Catherine, your tongue wears as many disguises as your person! But you only mock me, cruel girl. You know the Lady Fleming has no more regard for any one, than hath the forlorn princess who is wrought into yonder piece of old figured court tapestry."

"It may be so," said Catherine Seyton, "but you should not speak so loud."

"Pshaw!" answered the page, but at the same time lowering his voice, "she cares for no one but herself and the Queen. And you know, besides, there is no one of you whose opinion I value, if I have not you: own. No—not that of Queen Mary herself."

"The more shame for you, if it be so," said Catherine, with great composure.

"Nay, but, fair Catherine," said the page, "why will you thus damp my ardour, when I am devoting myself, body and soul, to the cause of your mistress?"

"It is because in doing so," said Catherine, "you debase a cause so noble, by naming along with it any lower or more selfish motive. Believe me," she said, with kindling eyes, and while the blood mantled on her cheek, "they think wisely and falsely of women—I mean of those who deserve the name—who deem that they love the gratification of their vanity, of the mean purposes of engrossing a lover's admiration and affection, better than they love the virtue and honour of the man they may be brought to prefer. He that serves his religion, his prince, and his country, with ardour and devotion, need not plead his cause with the commonplace rant of romantic passion—the woman whom he honours with his love becomes his debtor, and her corresponding affection is engaged to repay his glorious toil."

"You hold a glorious prize for such toil," said the youth, bending his eyes on her with enthusiasm.

"Only a heart which knows how to value it," said Catherine. "He that should free this injured Princess from these dungeons, and set her at liberty among her loyal and warlike nobles, whose hearts are burning to welcome her—where is the maiden in Scotland whom the love of such a hero would

not honour, were she sprung from the blood royal of the land, and he the offspring of the poorest cottager that ever held a plough!"

"I am determined," said Roland, "to take the adventure. Tell me first, however, fair Catherine, and speak it as if you were confessing to the priest—this poor Queen, I know she is unhappy—but, Catherine, do you hold her innocent? She is accused of murder."

"Do I hold the lamb guilty, because it is assailed by the wolf?" answered Catherine; "do I hold yonder sun polluted, because an earth-damp sullies his beams?"

The page sighed and looked down. "Would my conviction were as deep as thine! But one thing is clear, that in this captivity she hath wrong—She rendered herself up on a capitulation, and the terms have been refused her—I will embrace her quarrel to the death!"

"Will you—will you, indeed?" said Catherine, taking his hand in her turn. "Oh, be but firm in mind, as thou art bold in deed and quick in resolution; keep but thy plighted faith, and after ages shall honour thee as the saviour of Scotland!"

"But when I have toiled successfully to win that Leah, Honour, thou wilt not, my Catherine," said the page, "condemn me to a new term of service for that Rachel, Love?"

"Of that," said Catherine, again extricating her hand from his grasp, "we shall have full time to speak; but Honour is the elder sister, and must be won the first."

"I may not win her," answered the page; "but I will venture fairly for her, and man can do no more. And know, fair Catherine,—for you shall see the very secret thought of my heart,—that not Honour only—not only that other and fairer sister, whom you frown on me for so much as mentioning—but the stern commands of duty also, compel me to aid the Queen's deliverance."

"Indeed!" said Catherine; "you were wont to have doubts on that matter."

"Ay, but her life was not then threatened," replied Roland.

"And is it now more endangered than heretofore?" asked Catherine Seyton, in anxious terror.

"Be not alarmed," said the page; "but you heard the terms on which your royal mistress parted with the Lady of Lochleven?"

"Too well—but too well," said Catherine; "alas! that she cannot rule her princely resentment, and refrain from encounters like these!"

"That hath passed betwixt them," said Roland, "for which woman never forgives woman. I saw the Lady's brow turn pale, and then black, when, before all the menials, and in her moment of power, the Queen humbled her to the dust by taxing her with her shame. And I heard the oath of deadly resentment and revenge which she muttered in the ear of one, who by his answer will, I judge, be but too ready an executioner of her will."

"You terrify me," said Catherine.

"Do not so take it—call up the masculine part of your spirit—we will counteract and defeat her plans, be they dangerous as they may. Why do you look upon me thus, and weep?"

"Alas!" said Catherine, "because you stand there before me a living and breathing man, in all the adventurous glow and enterprise of youth, yet still possessing the frolic spirits of childhood—

there you stand, full alike of generous enterprise and childlike recklessness; and if to-day, or to-morrow, on some such brief space, you lie a mangled and lifeless corpse upon the floor of these hateful dungeons, who but Catherine Seyton will be the cause of your brave and gay career being broken short as you start from the goal! Alas! she whom you have chosen to twine your wrath, may too probably have to work your shroud!"

"And be it so, Catherine," said the page, in the full glow of youthful enthusiasm; "and do thou work my shroud! and if thou grace it with such tears as fall now at the thought, it will honour my remains more than an earl's mantle would my living body. But shame on this faintness of heart! the time craves a firmer mood—Be a woman, Catherine, or rather be a man—thou canst be a man if thou wilt."

Catherine dried her tears, and endeavoured to smile.

"You must not ask me," she said, "about that which so much disturbs your mind; you shall know all in time—nay, you should know all now, but that—Hush! here comes the Queen."

Mary entered from her apartment, paler than usual, and apparently exhausted by a sleepless night, and by the painful thoughts which had ill supplied the place of repose; yet the languor of her looks was so far from impairing her beauty, that it only substituted the frail delicacy of the lovely woman for the majestic grace of the Queen. Contrary to her wont, her toilette had been very hastily despatched, and her hair, which was usually dressed by Lady Fleming with great care, escaping from beneath the head-tire, which had been hastily adjusted, fell in long and luxuriant tresses of Nature's own curling, over a neck and bosom which were somewhat less carefully veiled than usual.

As she stepped over the threshold of her apartment, Catherine hastily drying her tears, ran to meet her royal mistress, and having first knelt at her feet, and kissed her hand, instantly rose, and placing herself on the other side of the Queen, seemed anxious to divide with the Lady Fleming the honour of supporting and assisting her. The page on his part, advanced and put in order the chair of state, which she usually occupied, and having placed the cushion and footstool for her accommodation, stepped back, and stood ready for service in the place usually occupied by his predecessor, the young Seneschal. Mary's eye rested an instant on him, and could not but remark the change of persons. Here was not the female heart which could refuse compassion, at least, to a gallant youth who had suffered in her cause, although he had been guided in his enterprise by a too presumptuous passion, and the words "Poor Douglas!" escaped from her lips, perhaps unconsciously, as she leant herself back in her chair, and put the kerchief to her eyes.

"Yes, gracious madam," said Catherine, assuming a cheerful manner, in order to cheer her sovereign, "our gallant Knight is indeed banished—the adventure was not reserved for him: but he has left behind him a youthful Esquire, as much devoted to your Grace's service, and who, by me, makes you tender of his hand and sword."

"If they may in aught avail your Grace," said Roland Grange, bowing profoundly.

"Alas!" said the Queen, "what needs this, Catherine?"

rine!—why prepare new victims to be involved in, and overwhelmed by, my cruel fortune!—were we not better cease to struggle, and ourselves sink in the tide without farther resistance, than thus drag into destruction with us every generous heart which makes an effort in our favour!—I have had but too much of plot and intrigue around me, since I was stretched an orphan child in my very cradle, while contending nobles strove which should rule in the name of this unconscious innocent. Surely time it were that all this busy and most dangerous coil should end. Let me call my prison a convent, and my seclusion a voluntary sequestration of myself from the world and its ways.”

“Speak not thus, madam, before your faithful servants,” said Catherine, “to discourage their zeal at once, and to break their hearts. Daughter of Kings, be not in this hour so unkingly—Come, Roland, and let us, the youngest of their followers, shew ourselves worthy of *their* cause—let us kneel before her footstool, and implore her to be her own magnanimous self.” And leading Roland Gramesse to the Queen’s seat, they both kneeled down before her. Mary raised herself in her chair, and sat erect, while, extending one hand to be kissed by the page, she arranged with the other the clustering locks which shaded the bold yet lovely brow of the high-spirited Catherine.

“Alas! *ma sœur*,” she said, for so in fondness she often called her young attendant, “that you should thus desperately mix with my unhappy fate the fortune of your young lives!—Are they not a lovely couple, my Fleming! and is it not heart-rending to think that I must be their ruin!”

“Not so,” said Roland Gramesse, “it is we, gracious Sovereign, who will be your deliverers.”

“*Ex oribus parvulorum!*” said the Queen, looking upward; “if it is by the mouth of these children that Heaven calls me to resume the stately thoughts which become my birth and my rights, thou wilt grant them thy protection, and to me the power of rewarding their zeal!”—Then turning to Fleming, she instantly added, “Thou knowest, my friend, whether to make those who have served me happy, was not ever Mary’s favourite pastime. When I have been rebuked by the stern preachers of the Calvinistic heresy—when I have seen the fierce countenances of my nobles averted from me, has it not been because I mixed in the harmless pleasures of the young and gay, and rather for the sake of their happiness than my own, have mingled in the masque, the song, or the dance, with the youth of my household! Well, I repeat not of it—though Knox termed it sin, and Morton degradation—I was happy, because I saw happiness around me; and woe betide the wretched jealousy that can extract guilt out of the overflowings of an unguarded gaiety!”

“Fleming, if we are restored to our throne, shall we not have one blithesome day at a blithesome bridal, of which we must now name neither the bride nor the bridegroom! but that bridegroom shall have the Marquis of Blairgowrie, a fair gift even for a Queen to give, and that bride’s chaplet shall be twined with the fairest pearls that ever were found in the depths of Lochlemond; and thou thyself, Mary Fleming, the best dresser of tresses that ever busked the tresses of a Queen, and who would scorn to touch those of any woman of lower rank,—thou thyself shalt, for my love, twine them into the bride’s tresses.—Look! my Fleming, suppose

them such clustered locks as those of our Catherine, they would not put shame upon thy skill.”

So saying, she passed her hand fondly over the head of her youthful favourite, while her more aged attendant replied despondently, “Alas! madam, your thoughts stray far from home.”

“They do, my Fleming,” said the Queen; “but is it well or kind in you to call them back!—God knows, they have kept the perch this night but too closely—Come, I will recall the gay vision, were it but to punish them. Yes, at that blithesome bridal, Mary herself shall forget the weight of sorrows, and the toil of state, and herself once more lead a measure.”—At whose wedding was it that we last danced, my Fleming! I think care has troubled my memory—yet something of it I should remember—canst thou not aid me!—I know thou canst.”

“Alas! madam,” replied the lady—

“What!” said Mary, “wilt thou not help us so far! this is a peevish adherence to thine own graver opinion, which holds our talk as folly. But thou art court-bred, and wilt well understand me when I say, the Queen commands Lady Fleming to tell her where she led the last *branle*.”

With a face deadly pale, and a mien as if she were about to sink into the earth, the court-bred dame, no longer daring to refuse obedience, faltered out—“Gracious Lady—if my memory err not—it was at a masque in Holyrood—at the marriage of Sebastian.”

The unhappy Queen, who had hitherto listened with a melancholy smile, provoked by the reluctance with which the Lady Fleming brought out her story, at this ill-fated word interrupted her with a shriek so wild and loud that the vaulted apartment rang, and both Roland and Catherine sprung to their feet in the utmost terror and alarm. Meantime, Mary seemed, by the train of horrible ideas thus suddenly excited, surprised not only beyond self-command, but for the moment beyond the verge of reason.

“Traitors!” she said to the Lady Fleming, “thou wouldst slay thy sovereign—Call my French guards—*à moi! à moi! mes Français!*—I am beset with traitors in mine own palace—they have murdered my husband—Rescue! rescue! for the Queen of Scotland!” She started up from her chair—her features, late so exquisitely lovely in their paleness, now inflamed with the fury of frenzy, and resembling those of a Bellona. “We will take the field ourselves,” she said; “warn the city—warn Lothian and Fife—saddle our Spanish barb, and bid French Paris see our petronel be charged!—Better to die at the head of our brave Scotsmen, like our grandfather at Flodden, than of a broken heart, like our ill-starred father!”

“Be patient—be composed, dearest Sovereign,” said Catherine; and then addressing Lady Fleming angrily, she added, “How could you say aught that reminded her of her husband!”

The word reached the ear of the unhappy Princess, who caught it up, speaking with great rapidity. “Husband!—what husband!—Not his most Christian Majesty—he is ill at ease—he cannot mount on horseback.—Not him of the Lennox—but it was the Duke of Orkney thou wouldst say.”

“For God’s love, madam, be patient!” said the Lady Fleming.

But the Queen’s excited imagination could by no entreaty be diverted from its course. “Did his

come hither to our aid," she said, "and bring with him his lambs, as he calls them — Bowton, Hay of Talla, Black Ormiston, and his kinsman Hob — Fie! how swart they are, and how they smell of sulphur! What! clearest with Morton? Nay, if the Douglas and the Hepburn hatch the complot together, the bird, when it breaks the shell, will scare Scotland. Will it not, my Fleming?"

"She grows wilder and wilder," said Fleming; "we have too many hearers for these strange words."

"Roland," said Catherine, "in the name of God, begone! You cannot aid us here — Leave us to deal with her alone — Away — away!"

She thrust him to the door of the anteroom; yet even when he had entered that apartment, and shut the door, he could still hear the Queen talk in a loud and determined tone, as if giving forth orders, until at length the voice died away in a feeble and continued lamentation.

At this crisis Catherine entered the anteroom. "Be not too anxious," she said, "the crisis is now over; but keep the door fast — let no one enter until she is more composed."

"In the name of God, what does this mean?" said the page; "or what was there in the Lady Fleming's words to excite so wild a transport?"

"Oh, the Lady Fleming, the Lady Fleming," said Catherine, repeating the words impatiently; "the Lady Fleming is a fool — she loves her mistress, yet knows so little how to express her love, that were the Queen to ask her for very poison, she would deem it a point of duty not to resist her commands. I could have torn her starched head-tire from her formal head — The Queen should have as soon had the heart out of my body, as the word Sebastian out of my lips — That that piece of weaved tapestry should be a woman, and yet not have wit enough to tell a lie!"

"And what was this story of Sebastian?" said the page. "By Heaven, Catherine, you are all riddles alike!"

"You are as great a fool as Fleming," returned the impatient maiden; "know ye not, that on the night of Henry Darnley's murder, and at the blowing up of the Kirk of Field, the Queen's absence was owing to her attending on a masque at Holyrood, given by her to grace the marriage of this same Sebastian, who, himself a favoured servant, married one of her female attendants, who was near to her person?"

"By Saint Giles," said the page, "I wonder not at her passion, but only marvel by what forgetfulness it was that she could urge the Lady Fleming with such a question."

"I cannot account for it," said Catherine; "but it seems as if great and violent grief and horror sometimes obscure the memory, and spread a cloud like that of an exploding cannon, over the circumstances with which they are accompanied. But I may not stay here, where I came not to moralize with your wisdom, but simply to cool my resentment against that unwise Lady Fleming, which I think hath now somewhat abated, so that I shall endure her presence without any desire to damage either her church or conscience. Meanwhile, keep fast that door — I would not for my life that any of these heretics saw her in the unhappy state, which, brought on her as it has been by the success of their own diabolical plottings, they would not stick to

off, in their snuffing cans, the judgment of Providence."

She left the apartment just as the latch of the outward door was raised from without. But the bolt, which Roland had drawn on the inside, resisted the efforts of the person desirous to enter. "Who is there?" said Grame aloud.

"It is I," replied the harsh and yet slow voice of the steward Dryfesdale.

"You cannot enter now," returned the youth.

"And whosoever I?" demanded Dryfesdale, "seeing I come but to do my duty, and inquire what mean the shrieks from the apartment of the Moschittish woman. Wherefore, I say, since such is mine errand, can I not enter?"

"Simply," replied the youth, "because the bolt is drawn, and I have no fancy to undo it. I have the right side of the door to-day, as you had last night."

"Thou art ill-advised, thou malkert boy," replied the steward, "to speak to me in such fashion, but I shall inform my Lady of thine insolence."

"The insolence," said the page, "is meant for thee only, in fair requerd of thy discourtesy to me. For thy Lady's information, I have answer more courteous — you may say that the Queen is ill at ease, and desires to be disturbed neither by visits nor messages."

"I conjure you, in the name of God," said the old man, with more solemnity in his tone than he had hitherto used, "to let me know if her malady really gains power on her?"

"She will have no aid at your hand, or at your Lady's — wherefore, begone, and trouble us no more — we neither want, nor will accept of, aid at your hands."

With this positive reply, the steward, grumbling and dissatisfied, returned down stairs.

CHAPTER XXXII.

It is the curse of kings to be attended
By slaves, who take their humours for a warrant
To break into the bloody house of life,
And on the winking of authority
To understand a law.

King John.

THE Lady of Lochleven sat alone in her chamber, endeavouring with sincere but imperfect zeal, to fix her eyes and her attention on the black-lettered Bible which lay before her, bound in velvet and embroidery, and adorned with massive silver clasps and knops. But she found her utmost efforts unable to withdraw her mind from the resentful recollection of what had last night passed betwixt her and the Queen, in which the latter had with such bitter taunt reminded her of her early and long-repented transgression.

"Why," she said, "should I resent so deeply that another reproaches me with that which I have never ceased to make matter of blushing to myself! and yet, why should this woman, who reaps — at least, has reaped — the fruits of my folly, and has justified my son aside from the throne, why should she, in the face of all my domestic, and of her own, dare to upbraid me with my shame! Is she not in my power! Does she not fear me! Ha! wily tempter, I will wrestle with thee strongly, and

with better suggestions than my own evil heart can supply!"

She again took up the sacred volume, and was endeavouring to fix her attention on its contents, when she was disturbed by a tap at the door of the room. It opened at her command; and the steward Dryfesdale entered, and stood before her with a gloomy and perturbed expression on his brow.

"What has chanced, Dryfesdale, that thou lookest thus?" said his mistress—"Have there been evil tidings of my son, or of my grandchildren?"

"No, Lady," replied Dryfesdale, "but you were deeply insulted last night, and I fear as thou art as deeply avenged this morning—Where is the chaplain?"

"What mean you by hints so dark, and a question so sudden? The chaplain, as you well know, is absent at Perth upon an assembly of the brethren."

"I care not," answered the steward; "he is but a priest of Baal."

"Dryfesdale," said the Lady, sternly, "what meanest thou? I have ever heard, that in the Low Countries thou didst herd with the Anabaptist preachers, those boars which tear up the vintage—But the ministry which suits me and my house must content my retainers."

"I would I had good ghostly counsel, though," replied the steward, not attending to his mistress's rebuke, and seeming to speak to himself. "This woman of Moab—"

"Speak of her with reverence," said the Lady; "she is a king's daughter."

"Be it so," replied Dryfesdale; "she goes where there is little difference betwixt her and a beggar's child—Mary of Scotland is dying."

"Dying, and in my castle!" said the Lady, starting up in alarm; "of what disease, or by what accident?"

"Bear patience, Lady. The ministry was mine."

"Thine, villain and traitor!—how didst thou dare—"

"I heard you insulted, Lady—I heard you demand vengeance—I promised you should have it, and I now bring tidings of it."

"Dryfesdale, I trust thou ravest!" said the Lady.

"I rave not," replied the steward. "That which was written of me a million of years ere I saw the light, must be executed by me. She hath that in her veins that, I fear me, will soon stop the springs of life."

"Cruel villain," exclaimed the Lady, "thou hast not poisoned her?"

"And if I had," said Dryfesdale, "what does it so greatly merit? Men bane vermin—why not rid them of their enemies so? In Italy they will do it for a cruizador."

"Cowardly ruffian, begone from my sight!"

"Think better of my zeal, Lady," said the steward, "and judge not without looking around you. Lindsey, Ruthven, and your kinsman Morton, poniarded Rissid, and yet you now see no blood on their embroidery—the Lord Semple stabbed the Lord of Sanquhar—does his bonnet sit a jot more awry on his brow? What noble lives in Scotland who has not had a share, for policy or revenge, in some such dealing!—and who imputes it to them? Be not threatened with names—a dagger or a draught work to the same end, and are little unlike—a glass phial imprisons the one, and a

leathern sheath the other—one deals with the brain, the other sluices the blood—Yet, I say not I gave ought to this lady."

"What dost thou mean by thus dallying with me?" said the Lady; "as thou wouldst save thy neck from the rope it merits, tell me the whole truth of this story—thou hast long been known a dangerous man."

"Ay, in my master's service I can be cold and sharp as my sword. Be it known to you, that when last on shore, I consulted with a woman of skill and power, called Nicneven, of whom the country has rung for some brief time past. Fools asked her for charms to make them beloved, misers for means to increase their store; some demanded to know the future—an idle wish, since it cannot be altered, others would have an explanation of the past—idler still, since it cannot be recalled. I heard their queries with scorn, and demanded the means of avenging myself of a deadly enemy, for I grow old, and may trust no longer to Bilboa blade. She gave me a packet—'Mix that,' said she, 'with any liquid, and thy vengeance is complete.'"

"Villain! and you mixed it with the food of this imprisoned Lady, to the dishonour of thy master's house!"

"To redeem the insulted honour of my master's house, I mixed the contents of the packet with the jar of succory-water: They seldom fail to drain it, and the woman loves it over all."

"It was a work of hell," said the Lady Lockley, "both the asking and the granting.—Away, wretched man, let us see if aid be yet too late!"

"They will not admit us, madam, save we enter by force—I have been twice at the door, but can obtain no entrance."

"We will beat it level with the ground, if needful—And, hold!—summon Randal hither instantly.—Randal, here is a foul and evil chance befallen—send off a boat instantly to Kinross, the Chamberlain Luke Lundin is said to have skill—Fetch off, too, that foul witch Nicneven—she shall first counteract her own spell, and then be burned to ashes in the island of Saint Serf. Away, away—Tell them to hoist sail and ply ear, as ever they would have good of the Douglas's hand!"

"Mother Nicneven will not be lightly found, or fetched hither on these conditions," answered Dryfesdale.

"Then grant her full assurance of safety—Look to it, for thine own life must answer for this lady's recovery."

"I might have guessed that," said Dryfesdale, sullenly; "but it is my comfort I have avenged mine own cause, as well as yours. She hath scoffed and scripped at me, and encouraged her sancy minion of a page to ridiculous stiff gait and slow speech. I felt it borne in tippen me that I was to be avenged on them."

"Go to the western turret," said the Lady, "and remain there in ward until we see how this gear will terminate. I know thy resolved disposition—thou wilt not attempt escape."

"Not were the walls of the turret of egg-shells, and the lake sheeted with ice," said Dryfesdale. "I am well taught, and strong in belief, that man does naught of himself; he is but the foam on the billow, which rises, bubbles, and bursts, not by its own effort, but by the mightier impulse of fate which urges him! Yet, Lady, if I may advise

amid this sea for the life of the Jesabel of Scotland, forget not what is due to thine own honour, and keep the matter secret as you may."

So saying, the gloomy fatalist turned from her, and stalked off with sullen composure to the place of confinement allotted to him.

His lady caught at his last hint, and only expressed her fear that the prisoner had partaken of some unwholesome food, and was dangerously ill. The castle was soon alarmed and in confusion. Randal was despatched to the shore to fetch off Lundip, with such remedies as could counteract poison; and with farther instructions to bring Mother Nieneven, if she could be found, with full power to pledge the Lady of Lochleven's word for her safety.

Meanwhile the Lady of Lochleven herself held parley at the door of the Queen's apartment, and in vain urged the page to undo it.

"Foolish boy!" she said, "thine own life and thy Lady's are at stake—Open, I say, or we will cause the door to be broken down."

"I may not open the door without my royal mistress's orders," answered Roland; "she has been very ill, and now she slumbers—if you wage her by using violence, let the consequence be on you and your followers."

"Was ever woman in a strait so fearful!" exclaimed the Lady of Lochleven—"At least, thou rash boy, beware that no one tastes the food, but especially the jar of succory-water."

She then hastened to the turret, where Dryfesdale had composedly resigned himself to imprisonment. She found him reading, and demanded of him, "Was thy fell potion of speedy operation?"

"Slow," answered the steward. "The hag asked me which I chose—I told her I loved a slow and sure revenge. 'Revenge,' said she, 'is the highest-flavoured draught which man tastes upon earth, and he should sip it by little and little—not drain it up greedily at once.'"

"Against whom, unhappy man, couldst thou nourish so fell a revenge?"

"I had many objects, but the chief was that insolent page."

"The boy!—thou inhuman man," exclaimed the lady; "what could he do to deserve thy malice?"

"He rose in your favour, and you graced him with your commissions—that was one thing. He rose in that of George Douglas's also—that was another. He was the favourite of the Calvinistic Henderson, who hated me because my spirit disowns a separated priesthood. The Monkish Queen held him dear—winds from each opposing point blew in his favour—the old servant of your house was held lightly among ye—above all, from the first time I saw his face, I longed to destroy him."

"What fiend have I nurtured in my house?" replied the Lady. "May God forgive me the sin of having given thee food and raiment!"

"You might not choose, Lady," answered the steward. "Long ere this castle was builded—ye, long ere the islet which contains it reared its head above the blue water, I was destined to be your faithful slave, and you to be my ungrateful mistress. Remember you not when I plunged amid the victorious French, in the time of this lady's mother, and brought off your husband, when those who had hung at the same breast with him dared not attempt the rescue!—Remember how I plunged

into the lake when your grandson's skiff was overtaken by the tempest, boarded, and steered her safe to the land. Lady—the servant of a Scottish baron is he who regards not his own life, or that of any other, save his master. And, for the death of the woman, I had tried the potion on her sooner, had not Master George been her taster. Her death—would it not be the happiest news that Scotland ever heard! Is she not of the bloody Guisain stock, whose sword was so often red with the blood of God's saints! Is she not the daughter of the wretched tyrant James, whom Heaven cast down from his kingdom, and, his pride, even as the king of Babylon was smitten!"

"Peace, villain!" said the Lady—a thousand varied recollections thronging on her mind at the mention of her royal lover's name; "Peace, and disturb not the ashes of the dead—of the royal, of the unhappy dead. Read thy Bible; and may God grant thee to avail thyself better of its contents than thou hast yet done!" She departed hastily, and as she reached the next apartment, the tears rose in her eyes so hastily, that she was compelled to stop and use her kerchief to dry them. "I expected not this," she said, "no more than to have drawn water from the dry flint, or sap from a withered tree. I saw with a dry eye the apostasy and shame of George Douglas, the hope of my son's house—the child of my love; and yet I now weep for him who has so long lain in his grave—for him to whom I owe it, that his daughter can make a scoffing and a jest of my name! But she is his daughter—my heart, hardened against her for so many causes, relents when a glance of her eye places her father unexpectedly before me—and as often her likeness to that true daughter of the house of Guise, her detested mother, has again confirmed my resolution. But she must not—must not die in my house, and by so foul a practice. Thank God, the operation of the potion is slow, and may be counteracted. I will to her apartment once more. But oh! that hardened villain, whose fidelity we held in such esteem, and had such high proof of! What miracle can unite so much wickedness and so much truth in one bosom!"

The Lady of Lochleven was not aware how far minds of a certain gloomy and determined cast by nature, may be warped by a keen sense of petty injuries and insults, combining with the love of gain, and sense of self-interest, and amalgamated with the crude, wild, and indigested fanatical opinions which this man had gathered among the crazy sectaries of Germany; or how far the doctrines of fatalism, which he had embraced so decidedly, near the human conscience, by representing our actions as the result of inevitable necessity.

During her visit to the prisoner, Roland had communicated to Catherine the tenor of the conversation he had had with her at the door of the apartment. The quick intelligence of that lively maiden instantly comprehended the outline of what was believed to have happened, but her prejudices hurried her beyond the truth.

"They meant to have poisoned us," she exclaimed in horror, "and there stands the fatal liquor which should have done the deed!—Ay, as soon as Douglas ceased to be our taster, our food was likely to be fatally seasoned. Thou, Roland, who shouldst have made the essay, wert readily doomed to die with us. Oh, dearest Lady Fleming, pardon, per-

don, for the injuries I said to you in my anger—your words were prompted by Heaven to save our lives, and especially that of the injured Queen. But what have we now to do! that old crocodile of the lake will be presently back to shed her hypocritical tears over our dying agonies.—Lady Fleming, what shall we do?”

“Our Lady help us in our need!” she replied; “how should I tell!—unless we were to make our plaint to the Regent.”

“Make our plaint to the devil,” said Catherine impatiently, “and accuse his dam at the foot of his burning throne!—The Queen still sleeps—we must gain time. The poisoning hag must not know her scheme has miscarried; the old envenomed spider has but too many ways of mending her broken web.—The jar of succory-water,” said she—“Roland if thou be’st a man, help me—empty the jar on the chimney: from the window—make such waste among the viands as if we had made our usual meal, and leave the fragments on cup and porringer, but taste nothing as thou lovest thy life. I will sit by the Queen, and tell her at her waking, in what a fearful pass we stand. Her sharp wit and ready spirit will teach us what is best to be done. Meanwhile, till farther notice, observe, Roland, that the Queen is in a state of torpor—that Lady Fleming is indisposed—that character” (speaking in a lower tone) “will suit her best, and save her wits some labour in vain. I am not so much indisposed, thou understandest.”

“And I?” said the page.—

“You?” replied Catherine, “you are quite well—who thinks it worth while to poison puppy-dogs or pages?”

“Does this levity become the time?” asked the page.

“It fits, it does,” answered Catherine Seyton; “if the Queen approves, I see plainly how this disconcerted attempt may do us good service.”

She went to work while she spoke, eagerly assisted by Roland. The breakfast table soon displayed the appearance as if the meal had been eaten as usual; and the ladies retired as softly as possible into the Queen’s sleeping apartment. At a new summons of the Lady Lochleven, the page undid the door, and admitted her into the anteroom, asking her pardon for having withstood her, alleging in excuse, that the Queen had fallen into a heavy slumber since she had broken her fast.

“She has eaten and drunken, then?” said the Lady of Lochleven.

“Surely,” replied the page, “according to her Grace’s ordinary custom, unless upon the fasts of the church.”

“The jar,” she said, hastily examining it, “it is empty.—drank the Lady Mary the whole of this water?”

“A large part, madam; and I heard the lady Catherine Seyton jestingly upbraid the Lady Mary Fleming with having taken more than a just share of what remained, so that but little fell to her own lot.”

“And are they well in health?” said the Lady of Lochleven.

“Lady Fleming,” said the page, “complains of lethargy, and looks duller than usual; and the Lady Catherine of Seyton feels her head somewhat more giddy than is her wont.”

He raised his voice a little as he said these words,

to apprise the ladies of the part assigned to each of them, and not, perhaps, without the wish of conveying to the ears of Catherine the page-like jest which lurked in the allotment.

“I will enter the Queen’s bedchamber,” said the Lady Lochleven; “my business is express.”

As she advanced to the door, the voice of Catherine Seyton was heard from within—“No one can enter here—the Queen sleeps.”

“I will not be controlled, young lady,” replied the Lady of Lochleven; “there is, I wot, no inner bar, and I will enter in your despite.”

“There is, indeed, no inner bar,” answered Catherine, firmly, “but there are the staples where that bar should be; and into those staples have I thrust mine arm, like an ancestress of your own, when, better employed than the Douglasses of our days, she thus defended the bedchamber of her sovereign against murderers. Try your force, then, and see whether a Seyton cannot rival in courage a maiden of the house of Douglas.”

“I dare not attempt the pass at such risk,” said the Lady of Lochleven: “Strange, that this Princess, with all that justly attaches to her as blame-worthy, should preserve such empire over the minds of her attendants.—Damsel, I give thee my honour that I come for the Queen’s safety and advantage. Awaken her, if thou lovest her, and pray her leave that I may enter—I will retire from the door the whilst.”

“Thou wilt not awaken the Queen?” said the Lady Fleming.

“What choice have we?” said the ready-witted maiden, “unless you deem it better to wait till the Lady Lochleven herself plays lady of the bedchamber. Her fit of patience will not last long, and the Queen must be prepared to meet her.”

“But thou wilt bring back her Grace’s fit by thus disturbing her.”

“Heaven forbid!” replied Catherine; “but if so, it must pass for an effect of the poison. I hope better things, and that the Queen will be able when she wakes to form her own judgment in this terrible crisis. Meanwhile, do thou, dear Lady Fleming, practise to look as dull and heavy as the alertness of thy spirit will permit.”

Catherine knelt by the side of the Queen’s bed, and, kissing her hand repeatedly, succeeded at last in awakening without alarming her. She seemed surprised to find that she was ready dressed, but sat up in her bed, and appeared so perfectly composed, that Catherine Seyton, without farther preamble, judged it safe to inform her of the predicament in which they were placed. Mary turned pale, and crossed herself again and again, when she heard the imminent danger in which she had stood. But, like the Ulysses of Homer,

—Heavily waking yet,

Spring in her mind the momentary wit,

and she at once understood her situation, with the dangers and advantages that attended it.

“We cannot do better,” she said, after her hasty conference with Catherine, pressing her at the same time to her bosom, and kissing her forehead; “we cannot do better than to follow the scheme so happily devised by thy quick wit and bold affection. Undo the door to the Lady Lochleven—She shall meet her match in art, though not in perfidy. Fleming, draw close the curtains, and get thee to

"And it—thou art a better three-woman than an actress; do but breathe heavily, and, if thou wilt, groan slightly, and it will top thy part. Hark! they come. Now, Catherine of Medicis, may thy spirit inspire me, for a cold northern brain is too blunt for this scene!"

Unhindered by Catherine Seyton, and stepping as light as she could, the Lady Lochleven was shewn into the twilight apartment, and conducted to the side of the couch, where Mary, pallid and exhausted from a sleepless night, and the subsequent agitation of the morning, lay extended so listlessly as might well confirm the worst fears of her hostess.

"Now, God forgive us our sins!" said the Lady of Lochleven, forgetting her pride, and throwing herself on her knees by the side of the bed; "It is too true—she is murdered!"

"Who is in the chamber?" said Mary, as if awaking from a heavy sleep. "Seyton, Fleming, where are you? I heard a strange voice. Who waits!—Call Courgeilles."

"Alas! her memory is at Holyrood, though her body is at Lochleven.—Forgive, madam," continued the Lady, "if I call your attention to me—I am Margaret Erskine, of the house of Mar, by marriage Lady Douglas of Lochleven."

"Oh, our gentle hostess," answered the Queen, "who hath such care of our lodgings and of our diet—Weumber you too much and too long, good Lady of Lochleven; but we now trust your task of hospitality is well-nigh ended."

"Her words go like a knife through my heart," said the Lady of Lochleven—"With a bleeding heart, I pray your Grace to tell me what is your ailment, that aid may be had, if there be yet time."

"Nay, my ailment," replied the Queen, "is nothing worth telling, or worth a leech's notice—my limbs feel heavy—my heart feels cold—a prisoner's limbs and heart are rarely otherwise—fresh air, methinks, and freedom, would soon revive me; but as the Estates have ordered it, death alone can break my prison-doors."

"Were it possible, madam," said the Lady, "that your liberty could restore your perfect health, I would myself encounter the resentment of the Regent—of my son, Sir William—of my whole friends, rather than you should meet your fate in this castle."

"Alas! madam," said the Lady Fleming, who conceived the time propitious to shew that her own address had been held too lightly of; "it is but trying what good freedom may work upon us; for myself, I think a free walk on the greensward would do me much good at heart."

The Lady of Lochleven rose from the bedside, and darted a penetrating look at the elder valetudinary. "Are you so evil-disposed, Lady Fleming?"

"Evil-disposed indeed, madam," replied the court dame, "and more especially since breakfast."

"Help! help!" exclaimed Catherine, anxious to break off a conversation which bored her exceedingly as good; "help! I say, help!" the Queen is about to pass away. Aid her, Lady Lochleven, if you be a woman!"

The Lady happened to support the Queen's head, who, turning her eyes towards her with an air of great haughtiness, exclaimed, "Thanks, my dearest Lady of Lochleven—notwithstanding some passages of late, I have never misapprehended or mis doubted

your affection to our house. It was proved, as I have heard, before I was born."

The Lady Lochleven sprung from the floor, on which she had again knelt, and, having paced the apartment in great disorder, flung open the lattice, as if to get air.

"Now, our Lady forgive me!" said Catherine to herself. "How deep must the love of sarcasm be implanted in the breasts of us women, since the Queen, with all her sense, will risk ruin rather than rein in her wit!" She then adventured, stooping over the Queen's person, to press her arm with her hand, saying, at the same time, "For God's sake, madam, restrain yourself!"

"Thou art too forward, maiden," said the Queen; but immediately added, in a low whisper, "Forgive me, Catherine; but when I felt the hag's murderous hands busy about my head and neck, I felt such disgust and hatred, that I must have said something, or died. But I will be schooled to better behaviour—only see that thou let her not touch me."

"Now, God be praised!" said the Lady Lochleven, withdrawing her head from the window, "the boat comes as fast as sail and oar can send wood through water—It brings the leech and a female—certainly, from the appearance, the very person I was in quest of. Were she but well out of this castle, with our honour safe, I would that she were on the top of the wildest mountain in Norway; or I would I had been there myself, ere I had undertaken this trust."

While she thus expressed herself, standing apart at one window, Roland Grasse, from the other, watched the boat bursting through the waters of the lake, which glided from its side in ripple and in foam. He, too, became sensible, that at the stern was seated the medical Chamberlain, clothed in his black velvet cloak; and that his own relative, Magdalen Grasse, in her assumed character of Mother Ninesven, stood in the bow, her hands clasped together, and pointed towards the castle, and her attitude, even at that distance, expressing enthusiastic eagerness to arrive at the landing-place. They arrived there accordingly, and while the supposed witch was detained in a room beneath, the physician was ushered to the Queen's apartment, which he entered with all due professional solemnity. Catherine had, in the meanwhile, fallen back from the Queen's bed, and taken an opportunity to whisper to Roland, "Methinks, from the information of the threadbare velvet cloak and the solemn beard, there would be little trouble in haltering yonder ass. But thy grandmother, Roland—thy grandmother's zeal will ruin us, if she get not a hint to dissemble."

Roland, without reply, glided towards the door of the apartment, crossed the parlour, and safely entered the antechamber; but when he attempted to pass farther, the word "Back! Back!" echoed from one to the other, by two men armed with carbines, convinced him that the Lady of Lochleven's suspicions had not, even in the midst of her alarms, been so far lulled to sleep as to omit the precaution of stationing sentinels on her prisoners. He was compelled, therefore, to return to the parlour, or audience-chamber, in which he found the Lady of the castle in conference with her learned leech.

"A truce with your cant phrases and your solemn foppery, Leland," in such terms she accented the

man of art, "and let me know instantly, if thou canst tell, whether this lady hath swallowed aught that is less than wholesome!"

"Nay, but, good lady—honoured patroness—to whom I am alike bondsman in my medical and official capacity, deal reasonably with me. If this, mine illustrious patient, will not answer a question, saving with signs and means—if that other honourable lady will do nought but yawn in my face when I inquire after the diagnostics—and if that other young damsel, who I profess is a comely maiden—"

"Talk not to me of comeliness or of damsels," said the Lady of Lochleven, "I say, are they evil-disposed?—In one word, man, have they taken poison, ay or no?"

"Poisons, madam," said the learned leech—"are of various sorts. There is your animal poison, as the *lepus marinus*; as mentioned by Dioscorides and Galen—there are mineral and semi-mineral poisons, as those compounded of sublimate regulus of antimony, vitriol, and the arsenical salts—there are your poisons from herbs and vegetables, as the aqua cymabaris, opium, aconitum, cantharides, and the like—there are also—"

"Now, put upon thee for a learned fool!—and I myself am no better for expecting an oracle from such a log," said the Lady.

"Nay, but if your ladyship will have patience—if I knew what food they have partaken of, or could see but the remnants of what they have last eaten—for as to the external and internal symptoms, I can discover nought like; for, as Galen saith in his second book *de Antidotis*—"

"Away, fool!" said the Lady; "send the hag hither; she shall avouch what it was that she hath given to the wretch Dryfesdale, or the pilnie-winks and thumbikins shall wrench it out of her finger joints!"

"Art hath no enemy unless the ignorant," said the mortified Doctor; veiling, however, his remark under the Latin version, and stepping apart into a corner to watch the result.

In a minute or two Magdalen Græme entered the apartment, dressed as we have described her at the revel, but with her muffler thrown back, and all affectation of disguise. "She was attended by two guards, of whose presence she did not seem even to be conscious, and who followed her with an air of embarrassment and timidity, which was probably owing to their belief in her supernatural power, coupled with the effect produced by her bold and undaunted demeanour. She confronted the Lady of Lochleven, who seemed to endure with high disdain the confidence of her air and manner.

"Wretched woman!" said the Lady, after essaying for a moment to bear her down, before she addressed her, by the stately severity of her look, "what was that powder which thou didst give to a servant of this house, by name Jasper Dryfesdale, that he might work out with it some slow and secret vengeance?—Confess its nature and properties, or, by the honour of Douglas, I give thee to fire and stake before the sun is lower!"

"Alas!" said Magdalen Græme in reply, "and when I became a Douglas or a Douglas's man so unfurnished of his means of revenge, that he should seek death at the hands of a poor and solitary woman! The towers in which your captive pine away like unpitied graves, yet stand fast on their

foundation—the crimes wrought in them have not yet burst their vaults asunder—your men have still their crossbows, pistolets, and daggers—why need you seek to herbs or charms for the execution of your revenges?"

"Hear me, foul hag," said the Lady Lochleven,—"but what avails speaking to thee?—Bring Dryfesdale hither, and let them be confronted together."

"You may spare your retainers the labour," replied Magdalen Græme. "I came not here to be confronted with a base groom, nor to answer the interrogatories of James's heretical leman—I came to speak with the Queen of Scotland—Give place there!"

And while the Lady Lochleven stood confounded at her boldness, and at the reproach she had cast upon her, Magdalen Græme strode past her into the bedchamber of the Queen, and, kneeling on the floor, made a salutation as if, in the Oriental fashion, she meant to touch the earth with her forehead.

"Hail, Princess!" she said, "hail, daughter of many a King, but graced above them all in that thou art called to suffer for the true faith—hail to thee, the pure gold of whose crown has been tried in the seven-times heated furnace of affliction—hear the comfort which God and our Lady send thee by the mouth of thy unworthy servant.—But first"—and stooping her head she crossed herself repeatedly, and, still upon her knees, appeared to be rapidly reciting some formula of devotion.

"Seize her, and drag her to the massy-moore!—to the deepest dungeon with the sorceress, whose master, the Devil, could alone have inspired her with boldness enough to insult the mother of Douglas in his own castle!"

Thus spoke the incensed Lady of Lochleven, but the physician presumed to interpose.

"I pray you, honoured madam, she be permitted to take her course without interruption. Peradventure we shall learn something concerning the nostrum she hath ventured, contrary to law and the rules of art, to addit to these ladies, through the medium of the steward Dryfesdale."

"For a fool," replied the Lady of Lochleven, "thou hast counselled wisely—I will bridle my resentment till their conference be over."

"God forbid, honoured lady," said Doctor Lundin, "that you should suppress it longer—nothing may more endanger the frame of your honoured body; and truly, if there be witchcraft in this matter, it is held by the vulgar, and even by solid authors on Demology, that three scruples of the ashes of the witch, when she hath been well and carefully burned at a stake, is a grand Catholicon in such matter, even as they prescribe *crisis cordis rabidi*, a hair of the dog that bit the patient, in cases of hydrophobia. I warrant neither treatment, being out of the regular practice of the schools; but, in the present case, there can be little harm in trying the cathartic upon this old necromancer and quack-salver—*fat experimentum* (as we say) in *corpore elii*."

"Peace, fool!" said the Lady, "she is about to speak."

At that moment Magdalen Græme arose from her knees, and turned her countenance of the Queen, at the same time advancing her foot, extending her arm, and assuming the most audacious

tude of a Sibyl in frenzy. As her gray hair floated back from beneath her coil, and her eye gleamed fire from under its shaggy eyebrow, the effect of her expressive, though emaciated features, was heightened by an enthusiasm approaching to insanity, and her appearance struck with awe all who were present. Her eyes for a time glanced wildly around as if seeking for something to aid her in collecting her powers of expression, and her lips had a nervous and quivering motion, as those of one who would fain speak, yet rejects as inadequate the words which present themselves. Mary herself caught the infection as if by a sort of magnetic influence, and raising herself from her bed, without being able to withdraw her eyes from those of Magdalen, waited as if for the oracle of a Pythia. She waited not long, for no sooner had the enthusiast collected herself, than her gaze became intensely steady, her features assumed a determined energy, and when she began to speak, the words flowed from her with a profuse fluency, which might have passed for inspiration, and which, perhaps, she herself mistook for such.

"Arise," she said, "Queen of France and of England! Arise, Lioness of Scotland, and be not dismayed though the nets of the hunters have encircled thee! Stoop not to feign with the false ones, whom thou shalt soon meet in the field. The issue of battle is with the God of armies, but by battle thy cause shall be tried. Lay aside, then, the arts of lower mortals, and assume those which become a Queen! True defender of the only true faith, the armoury of heaven is open to thee! Faithful daughter of the Church, take the keys of St Peter, to bind and to loose!—Royal Princess of the land, take the sword of St Paul, to smite and to shear! There is darkness in thy destiny;—but not in these towers, not under the rule of their haughty mistress, shall that destiny be closed.—In other lands the lioness may crouch to the power of the tigers, but not in her own—not in Scotland shall the Queen of Scotland long remain captive—nor is the fate of the royal Stewart in the hands of the traitor Douglas. Let the Lady of Lochleven double her bolts and deepen her dungeons, they shall not retain thee—each element shall give thee its assistance ere thou shalt continue captive—the land shall lend its earthquakes, the water its waves, the air its tempests, the fire its devouring flames, to desolate this house, rather than it shall continue the place of thy captivity.—Hear this, and tremble, all ye who fight against the light, for she says it, to whom it hath been assured!"

She was silent, and the astonished physician said, "If there was ever an *Enraguene*, or possessed demoniac, in our days, there is a devil speaking with that woman's tongue!"

"Practice," said the Lady of Lochleven, recovering her surprise; "here is all practice and imposture.—To the dungeon with her!"

"Lady of Lochleven," said Mary, arising from her bed, and coming forward with her wonted dignity, "ere you make arrest on any one in our presence, hear me but one word. I have done you some wrong—I believed you privy to the murderous purport of your rascal, and I deceived you in suffering you to believe it had taken effect. I did you wrong, Lady of Lochleven, for I perceive your purpose to aid me was sincere. We tasted not of the

liquid, nor are we now sick, save that we languish for our freedom."

"It is avowed like Mary of Scotland," said Magdalen Grimes; "and know, besides, that had the Queen drained the draught to the dregs, it was harmless as the water from a sainted spring. Trow ye, proud woman," she added, addressing herself to the Lady of Lochleven, "that I—I—would have been the wretch to put poison in the hands of a servant or vassal of the house of Lochleven, knowing whom that house contained! as soon would I have furnished drag to slay my own daughter!"

"Ah! I thus bearded in mine own castle!" said the Lady; "to the dungeon with her!—she shall abide what is due to the vender of poisons and practiser of witchcraft."

"Yet hear me for an instant, Lady of Lochleven," said Mary; "and do you," to Magdalen, "be silent at my command.—Your steward, lady, has by confession attempted my life, and those of my household, and this woman hath done her best to save them, by furnishing him with what was harmless, in place of the fatal drugs which he expected. Methinks I propose to you but a fair exchange when I say I forgive your vassal with all my heart, and leave vengeance to God, and to his conscience, so that you also forgive the boldness of this woman in your presence; for we trust you do not hold it as a crime, that she substituted an innocent beverage for the mortal poison which was to have drenched our cup."

"Heaven forefend, madam," said the Lady, "that I should account that a crime which saved the house of Douglas from a foul breach of honour and hospitality! We have written to our son touching our vassal's delict, and he must abide his doom, which will most likely be death. Touching this woman, her trade is damnable by Scripture, and is mortally punished by the wise laws of our ancestry—she also must abide her doom."

"And have I then," said the Queen, "no claim on the house of Lochleven for the wrong I have so nearly suffered within their walls! I ask but in requital, the life of a frail and aged woman, whose brain, as yourself may judge, seems somewhat affected by years and suffering."

"If the Lady Mary," replied the inflexible Lady of Lochleven, "hath been menaced with wrong in the house of Douglas, it may be regarded as some compensation, that her complots have cost that house the exile of a valued son."

"Plead no more for me, my gracious Sovereign," said Magdalen Grimes, "nor abuse yourself to ask so much as a gray hair of my head at her hands. I knew the risk at which I served my Church and my Queen, and was ever prompt to pay my poor life as the ransom. It is a comfort to think, that in slaying me, or in restraining my freedom, or even in injuring that single gray hair, the house, whose honour she boasts so highly, will have filled up the measure of their shame by the breach of their solemn written assurance of safety."—And taking from her bosom a paper, she handed it to the Queen.

"It is a solemn assurance of safety in life and limb," said Queen Mary, "with space to come and go, under the hand and seal of the Chamberlain of Kinross, granted to Magdalen Grimes, commonly called Mother Nineven, in consideration of her

consenting to put herself, for the space of twenty-four hours, if required, within the iron gate of the Castle of Lochleven."

"Knaves!" said the Lady, turning to the Chamberlain, "how dared you grant her such a protection?"

"It was by your Ladyship's orders, transmitted by Randal, as he can bear witness," replied Doctor Lundin; "nay, I am only like the pharmacopoliſt, who compounds the drugs after the order of the mediciner."

"I remember—I remember," answered the Lady; "but I meant the assurance only to be used in case, by residing in another jurisdiction, she could not have been apprehended under our warrant."

"Nevertheless," said the Queen, "the Lady of Lochleven is bound by the action of her deputy in granting the assurance."

"Madam," replied the Lady, "the house of Douglas have never broken their safe-conduct, and never will—too deeply did they suffer by such a breach of trust, exercised on themselves, when your Grace's ancestor, the second James, in defiance of the rights of hospitality, and of his own written assurance of safety, poniarded the brave Earl of Douglas with his own hand, and within two yards of the social board, at which he had just before sat the King of Scotland's honoured guest."

"Methinks," said the Queen, carelessly, "in consideration of so very recent and enormous a tragedy, which I think only chanced some six-score years ago, the Douglasses should have shewn themselves less tenacious of the company of their sovereigns, than you, Lady of Lochleven, seem to be of mine."

"Let Randal," said the Lady, "take the hag back to Kinross, and set her at full liberty, discharging her from our bounds in future, on peril of her head.—And let your wisdom," to the Chamberlain, "keep her company. And fear not for your character, though I send you in such company; for, granting her to be a witch, it would be a waste of fagots to burn you for a wizard."

The crest-fallen Chamberlain was preparing to depart; but Magdalen Græme, collecting herself, was about to reply, when the Queen interposed, saying, "Good mother, we heartily thank you for your unfeigned zeal towards our person, and pray you, as our liege-woman, that you abstain from whatever may lead you into personal danger; and, farther, it is our will that you depart without a word of farther parley with any one in this castle. For thy present guardon, take this small reliquary,—it was given to us by our uncle the Cardinal, and hath had the benediction of the Holy Father himself;—and now depart in peace and in silence.—For you, learned sir," continued the Queen, advancing to the Doctor, who made his reverence in a manner doubly embarrassed by the awe of the Queen's presence, which made him fear to do too little, and by the apprehension of his lady's displeasure, in case he should chance to do too much,—"for you, learned sir, as it was not your fault, though surely our own good fortune, that we did not need your skill at this time, it would not become us, however circumstanced, to suffer our leech to depart without such guardon as we can offer."

These words, and with the grace which

never forsook her, though, in the present case, there might lurk under it a little gentle ridicule, she offered a small embroidered purse to the Chamberlain, who, with extended hand and arched back, his learned face stooping until a physiognomist might have practised the metoposcopical science upon it, as seen from behind betwixt his gambadoes, was about to accept of the professional recompense offered by so fair as well as illustrious a hand. But the Lady interposed, and, regarding the Chamberlain, said aloud, "No servant of our house, without instantly relinquishing that character, and incurring withal our highest displeasure, shall dare receive any gratuity at the hand of the Lady Mary."

Sadly and slowly the Chamberlain raised his depressed stature into the perpendicular attitude, and left the apartment dejectedly, followed by Magdalen Græme, after, with mute but expressive gesture, she had kissed the reliquary with which the Queen had presented her, and, raising her clasped hands and uplifted eyes towards Heaven, had seemed to entreat a benediction upon the royal dame. As she left the castle, and went towards the quay where the boat lay, Roland Græme, anxious to communicate with her if possible, threw himself in her way, and might have succeeded in exchanging a few words with her, as she was guarded only by the dejected Chamberlain and his halberdiers, but she seemed to have taken, in its most strict and literal acceptation, the command to be silent which she had received from the Queen; for, so the repeated signs of her grandson, she only replied by laying her finger on her lip. Dr Lundin was not so reserved. Regret for the handsome gratuity, and for the compulsory task of self-denial imposed on him, had grieved the spirit of that worthy officer and learned mediciner—"Even thus, my friend," said he, squeezing the page's hand as he bade him farewell, "is merit rewarded. I came to cure this unhappy Lady—and I profess she well deserves the trouble, for, say what they will of her, she hath a most winning manner, a sweet voice, a gracious smile, and a most majestic wave of her hand. If she was not poisoned, say, my dear Master Roland, was that fault of mine, I being ready to cure her if she had!—and now I am denied the permission to accept my well earned honorarium—O Galen! O Hippocrates! is the graduate's cap and doctor's scarlet brought to this pass! *Frustra fatigamus remediis agros*!"

He wiped his eyes, stepped on the gunwale, and the boat pushed off from the shore, and went merrily across the lake, which was dimpled by the summer wind.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Death distant!—No, alas! he's over with us,
And shakes the dart at us in all our settings;
He licks within our cup, while we're in health;
Sits by our sick-bed, mocking our medicines;
We cannot walk, or sit, or ride, or travel,
But Death is by to seize us when he lists.

The Spanish Father.

FROM the agitating scene in the Queen's presence-chamber, the Lady of Lochleven retreated

¹ See Note G. Supposed description of the Earl of Mary.

to her own apartment, and ordered the steward to be called before her.

"Have they not disarmed thee, Dryfesdale?" she said, on seeing him enter, accoutred, as usual, with sword and dagger.

"No!" replied the old man; "how should they!—Your ladyship, when you commanded me to ward, said nought of laying down my arms; and, I think, none of your menials, without your order, or your son's, dare approach Jasper Dryfesdale for such a purpose.—Shall I now give up my sword to you!—it is worth little now, for it has fought for your house till it is worn down to old iron, like the pander's old chipping knife."

"You have attempted a deadly crime—poison under trust."

"Under trust!—hem!—I know not what your ladyship thinks of it, but the world without thinks the trust was given you even for that very end; and you would have been well off had it been so ended as I proposed, and you neither the worse nor the wiser."

"Wretch!" exclaimed the Lady, "and fool as well as villain, who could not even execute the crime he had planned!"

"I bid all fair for it as man could," replied Dryfesdale; "I went to a woman—a witch and a Papist—If I found not poison, it was because it was otherwise predestined. I tried fair for it; but the half-done job may be eluded, if you will."

"Villain! I am even now about to send off an express messenger to my son, to take order how thou shouldst be disposed of. Prepare thyself for death, if thou canst."

"He that looks on death, Lady," answered Dryfesdale, "as that which he may not shun, and which has its own fixed and certain hour, is ever prepared for it. He that is hanged in May will eat no flamine in midsummer—so there is the moan made for the old serving-man. But whom, pray I, send you on so fair an errand?"

"There will be no lack of messengers," answered his mistress.

"By my hand, but there will," replied the old man; "your castle is but poorly manned, considering the watches that you must keep, having this charge—There is the warder, and two others, whom you discarded for tampering with Master George; then for the warder's tower, the baillie, the donjon—five men mount each guard, and the rest must sleep for the most part in their clothes. To send away another man, were to harass the sentinels to death—unthrifty misgave for a household. To take in new soldiers were dangerous, the charge requiring tried men. I see but one thing for it—I will do your errand to Sir William Douglas myself."

"That were indeed a recourse!—And on what day within twenty years would it be done?" said the Lady.

"Even with the speed of man and horse," said Dryfesdale; "for though I care not much about the latter days of an old serving-man's life, yet I would like to know as soon as may be, whether my neck is mine own or the hangman's."

"Holdest thou thy own life so lightly?" said the Lady.

"Else I had reached none of that others," said the predestinarian.—"What is death!—it is but

ceasing to live—And what is living!—a weary return of light and darkness, sleeping and waking, being, hungered and eating. Your dead man needs neither, candle nor can, neither fire nor feather-bed; and the joiner's chest serves him for an eternal friend's jerkin."

"Wretched man! believest thou not that after death cometh the judgment?"

"Lady," answered Dryfesdale, "as my mistress, I may not dispute your words; but, as spiritually speaking, you are still but a burner of bricks in Egypt, ignorant of the freedom of the saints; for, as was well shewn to me by that gifted man, Niclaus Schafferbach, who was martyred by the bloody Bishop of Munster, he cannot sin who doth but execute that which is predestined, since—"

"Silence!" said the Lady, interrupting him,—"Answer me not with thy bold and presumptuous blasphemy, but hear me. Thou hast been long the servant of our house—"

"The born servant of the Douglas—they have had the best of me—I served them since I left Lockerbie; I was then ten years old, and you may soon add the threescore to it."

"Thy foul attempt has miscarried, so thou art guilty only in intention. It were a deserved deed to hang thee on the warder's tower; and yet in thy present mind, it were but giving a soul to Satan. I take thine offer, then—Go hence—here is my packet—I will add to it but a line, to desire him to send me a faithful servant or two to complete the garrison. Let my son deal with you as he will. If thou art wise, thou wilt make for Lockerbie so soon as thy foot touches dry land, and let the packet find another bearer; at all rates, look it miscarries not."

"Nay, madam," replied he—"I was born, as I said, the Douglas's servant, and I will be no corbie-messenger in mine old age—your message to your son shall be done as truly by me as if it concerned another man's neck. I take my leave of your honour."

The Lady issued her commands, and the old man was ferried over to the shore, to proceed on his extraordinary pilgrimage. It is necessary the reader should accompany him on his journey, which Providence had determined should not be of long duration.

On arriving at the village, the steward, although his disgrace had transpired, was readily accommodated with a horse, by the Chamberlain's authority; and the roads being by no means esteemed safe, he associated himself with Auchtermuchty, the common carrier, in order to travel in his company to Edinburgh.

The worthy waggoner, according to the established custom of all carriers, stage-coachmen, and other persons in such public authority, from the earliest days to the present, never wanted good reasons for stopping upon the road, as often as he would; and the place which had most captivation for him as a resting-place was a change-house, as it was termed, not very distant from a romantic dell, well known by the name of Keir's Craig. Attractions of a kind very different from those which arrested the progress of John Auchtermuchty and his wagon, still continue to hover round this romantic spot, and none has visited its vicinity without a desire to remain long and to return soon.

Arrived near his favourite haunts, not all the

authority of Dryfesdale (much diminished indeed by the rumours of his disgrace) could prevail on the carrier, obstinate as the brutes which he drove, to pass on without his accustomed halt, for which the distance he had travelled furnished little or no pretence. Old Keltie, the landlord, who has bestowed his name on a bridge in the neighbourhood of his quondam dwelling, received the carrier with his usual festive cordiality, and adjourned with him into the house, under pretence of important business, which, I believe, consisted in their emptying together a mutchkin stoup of usquebaugh. While the worthy host and his guest were thus employed, the discarded steward, with a double portion of moroseness in his gesture and look, walked discontentedly into the kitchen of the place, which was occupied but by one guest. The stranger was a slight figure, scarce above the age of boyhood, and in the dress of a page, but bearing an air of haughty aristocratic boldness and even insolence in his look and manner, that might have made Dryfesdale conclude he had pretensions to superior rank, had not his experience taught him how frequently these airs of superiority were assumed by the domestics and military retainers of the Scottish nobility.—"The pilgrim's morning to you, old sir," said the youth; "you come, as I think, from Lochleven Castle—What news of our bonny Queen!—a fairer dove was never pent up in so wretched a dovecot."

"They that speak of Lochleven, and of those whom its walls contain," answered Dryfesdale, "speak of what concerns the Douglas; and they who speak of what concerns the Douglas, do it at their peril."

"Do you speak from fear of them, old man, or would you make a quarrel for them!—I should have deemed your age might have cooled your blood."

"Never, while there are empty-pated coxcombs at each corner to keep it warm."

"The sight of thy gray hairs keeps mine cold," said the boy, who had risen up and now sat down again.

"It is well for thee, or I had cooled it with this holly-rod," replied the steward. "I think thou be'st one of those swash-bucklers, who brawl in alehouses and taverns; and who, if words were pikes, and oaths were Andrew Ferraras, would soon place the religion of Babylon in the land once more, and the woman of Moab upon the throne."

"Now, by Saint Bennet of Seyton," said the youth, "I will strike thee on the face, thou foul-mouthed old railing heretic!"

"Saint Bennet of Seyton!" echoed the steward; "a proper warrant is Saint Bennet's, and for a proper nest of wolf-birds like the Seytons!—I will arrest thee as a traitor to King James and the good Regent.——Ho! John Auchtermuchty, raise aid against the King's traitor!"

So saying, he laid his hand on the youth's collar, and drew his sword. John Auchtermuchty looked in, but, seeing the naked weapon, ran faster out than he entered. Keltie, the landlord, stood by and helped neither party, only exclaiming, "Gentlemen! gentlemen! for the love of Heaven!" and so forth. A struggle ensued, in which the young man, chafed at Dryfesdale's boldness, and unable, with the ease he expected, to extricate himself from the old man's determined grasp, drew his dagger, and with the

speed of light, dealt him three wounds in the breast and body, the least of which was mortal. The old man quunk on the ground with a deep groan, and the host set up a piteous exclamation of surprise.

"Pease, ye bawling hound!" said the wounded steward; "are dagger-stabs and dying men such rarities in Scotland, that you should cry as if the house were falling?—Youth, I do not forgive thee, for there is nought betwixt us to forgive. Thou hast done what I have done to more than one—And I suffer what I have seen them suffer—it was all ordained to be thus and not otherwise. But if thou wouldst do me right, thou wilt send this packet safely to the hands of Sir William of Douglas; and see that my memory suffer not, as if I would have loitered on mine errand for fear of my life."

The youth, whose passion had subsided the instant he had done the deed, listened with sympathy and attention, when another person, muffled in his cloak, entered the apartment, and exclaimed—"Good God! Dryfesdale, and expiring!"

"Ay, and" Dryfesdale would that he had been dead," answered the wounded man, "rather than that his ears had heard the words of the only Douglas that ever was false—but yet it is better as it is. Good my murderer, and the rest of you, stand back a little, and let me speak with this unhappy apostate.—Kneel down by me, master George—You have heard that I failed in my attempt to take away that Moabitish stumbling-block and her refuse—I gave them that which I thought would have removed the temptation out of thy path—and this, though I had other reasons to shew to thy mother and others, I did chiefly pursue for love of thee."

"For the love of me, base poisoner!" answered Douglas, "wouldst thou have committed so horrible, so unprovoked a murder, and mentioned my name with it!"

"And wherefore not, George of Douglas!" answered Dryfesdale. "Breath is now scarce with me, but I would spend my last gasp on this argument. Hast thou not, despite the honour thou owest to thy parents, the faith that is due to thy religion, the truth that is due to thy king, been so carried away by the charms of this beautiful sorceress, that thou wouldst have helped her to escape from her prison-house, and lent her thine arm again to ascend the throne, which she had made a place of abomination!—Nay, stir not from me—thy hand, though fast stiffening, has yet force enough to hold thee—What dost thou aim at!—to wed this witch of Scotland!—I warrant thee, thou mayest succeed—her heart and hand have been oft won at a cheaper rate, than thou, fool that thou art, would think thyself happy to pay. But, should a servant of thy father's house have seen thee embrace the fate of the idiot Barnley, or of the villain Bothwell—the fate of the murdered fool, or of the living pirate—while an ounce of ratbane would have saved thee!"

"Think on God, Dryfesdale," said George Douglas, "and leave the utterance of those horrors—Repent, if thou canst—if not, at least be silent.—Seyton, aid me to support this dying wretch, that he may compose himself to better thoughts, if it be possible."

"Seyton!" answered the dying man; "Seyton! Is it by a Seyton's hand that I fall at last!—There

is something of retribution in that—since the house had nigh lost a sister by my deed.” Fixing his fiding eyes on the youth, he added, “He hath her very features and presence!—Stoop down, youth, and let me see thee closer—I would know thee when we meet in yonder world, for homicides will herd together there, and I have been one.” He pulled Seyton’s face, in spite of some resistance closer to his own, looked at him fixedly, and added, “Thou hast begun young—thy career will be the briefer—ay, thou wilt be met with, and that anon—a young plant never throvs that was watered with an old man’s blood.—Yet why blame I thee! Strange turns of fate,” he muttered, ceasing to address Seyton, “I designed what I could not do, and he has done what he did not perchance design.—Wondrous, that our will should ever oppose itself to the strong and uncontrollable tide of destiny—that we should strive with the stream when we might drift with the current! My brain will serve me to question it no farther—I would Schœfferbach were here—yet why!—I am on a course, which the vessel can hold without a pilot.—Farewell, George of Douglas—I die true to thy father’s house.” He fell into convulsions at these words, and shortly after expired.

Seyton and Douglas stood looking on the dying man, and when the scene was closed, the former was the first to speak. “As I live, Douglas, I meant not this, and am sorry; but he laid hands on me, and compelled me to defend my freedom, as I best might, with my dagger.” If he were ten times thy friend and follower, I can but say that I am sorry.”

“I blame thee not, Seyton,” said Douglas, “though I lament the chance. There is an overruling destiny above us, though not in the sense in which it was viewed by that wretched man, who, beguiled by some foreign mystagogue, used the awful word as the ready apology for whatever he chose to do—we must examine the packet.”

They withdrew into an inner room, and remained deep in consultation, until they were disturbed by the entrance of Keltie, who, with an embarrassed countenance, asked Master George Douglas’s pleasure respecting the disposal of the body. “Your honour knows,” he added; “that I make my bread by living men, not by dead corpses; and old Mr Drydesdale, who was but a sorry customer while he was alive, occupies my public room now that he is deceased, and can neither call for ale nor brandy.”

“Tie a stone round his neck,” said Seyton, “and when the sun is down, have him to the Loch of Ore, heave him in, and let him alone for finding out the bottom.”

“Under your favour, sir,” said George Douglas “it shall not be so.—Keltie, thou art a true fellow to me, and thy having been so shall advantage thee. Send or take the body to the chapel at Scotland’s wall, or to the church of Ballingry, and tell what tale thou wilt of him having fallen in a brawl with some unruly guests of mine. Auchtermuchty knows ought else, nor are the times so peaceful as to admit close looking into such accounts.”

“Nay, let him tell the truth,” said Seyton, “so far as it harms not our scheme.—Say that Henry Seyton met with him, my good fellow;—I care not a brass bottle for the feud.”

“A feud with the Douglas was ever to be feared,

however,” said George, displeasure mingling with his natural deep gravity of manner.

“Not when the best of the name is on my side,” replied Seyton.

“Alas! Henry, if thou meanest me, I am but half a Douglas in this enterprise—half head, half heart, and half hand.—But I will think on one who can never be forgotten, and be all, or more, than any of my ancestors was ever.—Keltie, say it was Henry Seyton did the deed; but beware, not a word of me!—Let Auchtermuchty carry this packet” (which he had sealed with his own signet) “to my father at Edinburgh; and here is to pay for the funeral expenses, and thy loss of custom.”

“And the washing of the floor,” said the landlord, “which will be an extraordinary job; for blood, they say, will scarcely ever cleanse out.”

“But as for your plan,” said George of Douglas, addressing Seyton, as if in continuation of what they had been before treating of, “it has a good face; but, under your favour, you are yourself too hot and too young, besides other reasons which are much against your playing the part you propose.”

“We will consult the Father Abbot upon it,” said the youth.—“Do you ride to Kilmoss to-night?”

“Ay,—so I purpose,” answered Douglas; “the night will be dark, and suits a muffled man.”—Keltie, I forgot, there should be a stone laid on that man’s grave, reording his name, and his only merit, which was being a faithful servant to the Douglas.”

“What religion was the man of?” said Seyton; “he used words, which make me fear I have sent Satan a subject before his time.”

“I can tell you little of that,” said George Douglas; “he was noted for disliking both Rome and Geneva, and spoke of lights he had learned among the fierce sectaries of Lower Germany—an evil doctrine it was, if we judge by the fruits. God keep us from presumptuously judging of Heaven’s secrets!”

“Amen!” said the young Seyton, “and from meeting any encounter this evening.”

“It is not thy wont to pray so,” said George Douglas.

“No! I leave that to you,” replied the youth, “when you are seized with scruples of engaging with your father’s vassals. But I would fain have this old man’s blood off these hands of mine ere I shed more—I will confess to the Abbot to-night, and I trust to have light penance for ridding the earth of such a miscreant. All I sorrow for is, that he was not a score of years younger.—He drew steel first, however, that is one comfort.”

CHAPTER XXXIV.

*Ay, Pedro,—Come you here with mask and lantern,
Leader of ropes and other moonshine tools,
Why, youngster, thou mayst cheat the old Dueña,
Flatter the waiting-woman, bribe the valet;
But know, that if her father play the Gryphon,
Tameless and sleepless, proof to fraud or bribe,
And guard the hidden treasure of her beauty.*

The Spanish Father.

THE tenor of our tale carries us back to the Castle of Lochleven, where we take up the order of events

See Note F. *Magill’s Man.*

on the same remarkable day on which Dryfeastle had been dismissed from the castle. It was past noon, the usual hour of dinner, yet no preparations seemed made for the Queen's entertainment. Mary herself had retired into her own apartment, where she was closely engaged in writing. Her attendants were together in the presence-chamber, and much disposed to speculate on the delay of the dinner; for it may be recollected that their breakfast had been interrupted. "I believe in my conscience," said the page, "that having found the poisoning scheme miscarry, by having gone to the wrong merchant for their deadly wares, they are now about to try how famine will work upon us."

Lady Fleming was somewhat alarmed at this surmise, but comforted herself by observing that the chimney of the kitchen had reeked that whole day in a manner which contradicted the supposition. — Catherine Seyton presently exclaimed, "They were bearing the dishes across the court, marshalled by the Lady Lochleven herself, dressed out in her highest and stiffest ruff, with her parlet and sleeves of cyprus, and her huge old-fashioned farthingale of crimson velvet."

"I believe on my word," said the page, approaching the window also, "it was in that very farthingale that she captivated the heart of gentle King Jamie, which procured our poor Queen her precious bargain of a brother."

"That may hardly be, Master Roland," answered the Lady Fleming, who was a great recorder of the changes of fashion, "since the farthingales came first in when the Queen, Regent went to Saint Andrews, after the battle of Pinkie, and were then called *Vertugadins*—"

She would have proceeded farther in this important discussion, but was interrupted by the entrance of the Lady of Lochleven, who preceded the servants bearing the dishes, and formally discharged the duty of tasting each of them. Lady Fleming regretted, in courtly phrase, that the Lady of Lochleven should have undertaken so troublesome an office.

"After the strange incident of this day, madam," said the Lady, "it is necessary for my honour and that of my son, that I partake whatever is offered to my involuntary guest. Please to inform the Lady Mary that I attend her commands."

"Her Majesty," replied Lady Fleming, with due emphasis on the word, "shall be informed that the Lady Lochleven waits."

Mary appeared instantly, and addressed her hostess with courtesy, which even approached to something more cordial. "This is nobly done, Lady Lochleven," she said; "for though we ourselves apprehend no danger under your roof, our ladies have been much alarmed by this morning's chance, and our meal will be the more cheerful for your presence and assurance. Please you to sit down."

The Lady Lochleven obeyed the Queen's commands, and Roland performed the office of carver and attendant as usual. But, notwithstanding what the Queen had said, the meal was silent and unsocial; and every effort which Mary made to excite some conversation, died away under the solemn and chill replies of the Lady of Lochleven. At length it became plain that the Queen, who had considered these advances as a condescension on her part, and who signed herself justly on her powers of pleasing, became offended at the repulsive conduct of her

hostess. After looking with a significant glance at Lady Fleming and Catherine, she slightly shrugged her shoulders, and remained silent. A pause ensued, at the end of which the Lady Douglas spoke:—"I perceive, madam, I am a check on the mirth of this fair company. I pray you to excuse me—I am a widow—alone here in a most perilous charge—deserted by my grandson—betrayed by my servant—I am little worthy of the grace you do me in offering me a seat at your table, where I am aware that wit and pastime are usually expected from the guests."

"If the Lady Lochleven is serious," said the Queen, "we wonder by what simplicity she expects our present meals to be seasoned with mirth. If she is a widow, she lives honoured and uncontrolled, at the head of her late husband's household. But I know at least of one widowed woman in the world, before whom the words desertion and betrayal ought never to be mentioned, since no one has been made so bitterly acquainted with their import."

"I meant not, madam, to remind you of your misfortunes, by the mention of mine," answered the Lady Lochleven, and there was again a deep silence.

Mary at length addressed Lady Fleming. "We can commit no deadly sins here, *ma bonne*, where we are so well warded and looked to; but if we could, this Carthusian silence might be useful as a kind of penance. If thou hast adjusted my wimple amiss, my Fleming, or if Catherine hath made a wry stitch in her broderie, when she was thinking of something else than her work, or if Roland Graeme hath missed a wild-duck on the wing, and broke a quarrel-pane of glass in the turret window, as chanced to him a week since, now is the time to think on your sins and to repent of them."

"Madam, I speak with all reverence," said the Lady Lochleven; "but I am old, and claim the privilege of age. Methinks your followers might find fitter subjects for repentance than the trifles you mention, and so mention—once more, I crave your pardon—as if you jeered with sin and repentance both."

"You have been our taster, Lady Lochleven," said the Queen, "I perceive you would eke out your duty with that of our Father Confessor—and since you choose that our conversation should be serious, may I ask you why the Regent's promise—since your son se styles himself—has not been kept to me in that respect! From time to time this promise has been renewed, and is constantly broken. Methinks those who pretend themselves to so much gravity and sanctity, should not debar from others the religious succours which their consciences require."

"Madam, the Earl of Murray was indeed weak enough," said the Lady Lochleven, "to give so far way to your unhappy prejudice, and a religioner of the Pope presented himself in his part at our town of Kinross. But the Douglas is Lord of his own castle, and will not permit his threshold to be darkened, no not for a single moment, by an emissary belonging to the Bishop of Rome."

"Methinks it were well, then," said Mary, "that my Lord Regent would send me where there is less scruple and more charity."

¹ Diamond-shaped; usually, formed like the head of a spear, or arrow for the crescent.

"In this, madam," answered the Lady Lochleven, "you mistake the nature both of charity and of religion. Charity giveth to those who are in delirium the medicaments which may avail their health, but refuses those enticing cakes and liquors which please the palate, but augment the disease."

"This your charity, Lady Lochleven, is pure cruelty, under the hypocritical disguise of friendly care. I am oppressed amongst you as if you meant the destruction both of my body and soul; but Heaven will not endure such iniquity for ever, and they who are the most active agents in it may speedily expect their reward."

At this moment Randal entered the apartment, with a look so much perturbed, that the Lady Fleming uttered a faint scream, the Queen was obviously startled, and the Lady of Lochleven, though too bold and proud to evince any marked signs of alarm, asked hastily what was the matter?

"Dryfesdale has been slain, madam," was the reply; "murdered as soon as he gained the dry land by young Master Henry Seyton."

It was now Catherine's turn to start and grow pale. "Has the murderer of the Douglas's vassal escaped?" was the Lady's hasty question.

"There was none to challenge him but old Keltie, and the carrier Auchtermuchty," replied Randal; "unlikely men to stay one of the frackest youths in Scotland of his years, and who was sure to have friends and partakers at no great distance."

"Was the deed completed?" said the Lady.

"Done, and done thoroughly," said Randal; "a Seyton seldom strikes twice.—But the body was not despoiled, and your honour's packet goes forward to Edinburgh by Auchtermuchty, who leaves Keltie-Bridge early to-morrow—marry, he has drunk two bottles of aquavite to put the fright out of his head, and now sleeps them off beside his cart-avers."

There was a pause when this fatal tale was told. The Queen and Lady Douglas looked on each other, as if each thought how she could best turn the incident to her own advantage in the controversy, which was continually kept alive betwixt them—Catherine Seyton kept her kerchief at her eyes and wept.

"You see, madam, the bloody maxims and practice of the deluded Papists," said Lady Lochleven.

"Nay, madam," replied the Queen, "may rather you see the deserved judgment of Heaven upon a Calvinistical poisoner."

"Dryfesdale was not of the Church of Geneva, or of Scotland," said the Lady of Lochleven, hastily.

"He was a heretic, however," replied Mary; "there is but one true and unerring guide; the others lead alike into error."

"Well, madam, I trust it will reconcile you to your retreat, that this deed shows the temper of those who might wish you at liberty. Bloodthirsty tyrants, and cruel men-quellers are they all, from the Clan-Ronald and Clan-Torch in the north, to the Fernberghs and Buccleuchs in the south—the murdering Seytons in the east, and——"

"Methinks, madam, you forget that I am a Seyton!" said Catherine, withdrawing her kerchief from her face, which was now coloured with indignation.

"If I had forgot it, fair mistress, your forward bearing would have reminded me," said Lady Lochleven.

1 Boldly—most forward.

2 Out-hum.

"If my brother has slain the villain that would have poisoned his Sovereign, and his sister," said Catherine, "I am only so far sorry that he should have spared the hangman his proper task. For aught further, had it been the best Douglas in the land, he would have been honoured in falling by the Seyton's sword."

"Rarewell, gay mistress," said the Lady of Lochleven, rising to withdraw; "it is such maidens as you, who make giddy-fashioned revellers and deadly brawlers. Boys must needs rise, forsooth, in the grace of some sprightly damsel, who thinks to dance through life as through a French galliard." She then made her reverence to the Queen, and added, "Do you also, madam, fare you well, till carfew time, when I will make, perchance, more bold than welcome in attending upon your supper board.—Come with me, Randal, and tell me more of this cruel fact."

"Tis an extraordinary chance," said the Queen, when she had departed; "and, villain as he was, I would this man had been spared time for repentance. We will cause something to be done for his soul, if we ever attain our liberty, and the Church will permit such grace to a heretic.—But, tell me, Catherine, *qu'en savez-vous*—this brother of thine, who is so frack, as the fellow called him, bears he the same wonderful likeness to thee as formerly?"

"If your Grace means in temper, you know whether I am so frack as the serving-man spoke him."

"Nay, thou art prompt enough in all reasonable conscience," replied the Queen; "but thou art my own darling notwithstanding.—But I meant, is this thy twin-brother as like thee in form and features as formerly? I remember thy dear mother alleged it as a reason for destining thee to the veil, that, were ye both to go at large, thou wouldst surely get the credit of some of thy brother's mad pranks."

"I believe, madam," said Catherine, "there are some unusually simple people even yet, who can hardly distinguish betwixt us, especially when, for diversion's sake, my brother hath taken a female dress."—and as she spoke, she gave a quick glance at Roland Grème, to whom this conversation conveyed a ray of light, welcome as ever streamed into the dungeon of a captive through the door which opened to give him freedom.

"He must be a handsome cavalier this Brother of thine, if he be so like you," replied Mary. "He was in France, I think, for these late years, so that I saw him not at Holyrood."

"His looks, madam, have never been much found fault with," answered Catherine Seyton; "but I would he had less of that angry and heady spirit which evil times have encouraged amongst our young nobles. God knows, I grudge not his life in your Grace's quarrel; and love him for the willingness with which he labours for your rescue. But wherefore should he brawl with an old ruffianly serving-man, and stain at once his name with such a broll, and his hands with the blood of an old and ignoble wretch?"

"Nay, be patient, Catherine; I will not have thee traduce my gallant young knight. With Henry for my knight, and Roland Grème for my trusty squire, methinks I am like a princess of romance, who may shortly set at defiance the dungeons and the weapons of all wicked usurpers.—But my head aches with the agitation of the day. Take this *La Mar des Indes*, and resume where we left off on

Wednesday.—Our Lady help thy head, *gri!* or rather may she help thy heart!—I asked thee for the Sea of Histories, and thou hast brought *La Cronique d'Amour*.”

Once embarked upon the Sea of Histories, the Queen continued her labours with her needle, while Lady Fleming and Catherine read to her alternately for two hours.

As to Roland Græme, it is probable that he continued in secret intent upon the Chronicle of Love, notwithstanding the censure which the Queen seemed to pass upon that branch of study. He now remembered a thousand circumstances of voice and manner, which, had his own prepossession been less, must surely have discriminated the brother from the sister; and he felt ashamed, that, having as it were by heart every particular of Catherine's gestures, words, and manners, he should have thought, her, notwithstanding her spirits and liveliness, capable of assuming the bold step, loud tones, and forward assurance, which accorded well enough with her brother's hasty and masculine character. He endeavoured repeatedly to catch a glance of Catherine's eye, that he might judge how she was disposed to look upon him since he had made the discovery, but he was unsuccessful; for Catherine, when she was not reading herself, seemed to take so much interest in the exploits of the Teutonic knights against the Heathens of Esthonia and Livonia, that he could not surprise her eye even for a second. But when, closing the book, the Queen commanded their attendance in the garden, Mary, perhaps of set purpose, (for Roland's anxiety could not escape so practised an observer,) afforded him a favourable opportunity of accosting his mistress. The Queen commanded them to a little distance, while she engaged Lady Fleming in a particular and private conversation; the subject whereof we learn, from another authority, to have been the comparative excellence of the high standing ruff and the falling band. Roland must have been duller, and more sheepish than ever was youthful lover, if he had not endeavoured to avail himself of this opportunity.

“I have been longing this whole evening to ask of you, fair Catherine,” said the page, “how foolish and unapprehensive you must have thought me, in being capable to mistake betwixt your brother and you!”

“The circumstance does indeed little honour to my rustic manners,” said Catherine, “since those of a wild young man were so readily mistaken for mine. But I shall grow wiser in time; and with that view I am determined not to think of your follies, but to correct my own.”

“It will be the lighter subject of meditation of the two,” said Roland.

“I know not that,” said Catherine, very gravely; “I fear we have been both unpardonably foolish.”

“I have been mad,” said Roland, “unpardonably mad. But you, lovely Catherine—”

“I,” said Catherine in the same tone of unusual gravity, “have too long suffered you to use such expressions towards me—I fear, I can permit it no longer, and I blame myself for the pain it may give you.”

“And what can have happened so suddenly to change our relation to each other, or alter, with such sudden cruelty, your whole deportment to me?”

“I can hardly tell,” replied Catherine, “unless it be that the events of the day have impressed on my

mind the necessity of our observing more distance to each other. A chance similar to that which betrayed to you the existence of my brother, may make known to Henry the terms you have used to me; and, alas! his whole conduct, as well as his deed this day, makes me too justly apprehensive of the consequences.”

“Fear nothing for that, fair Catherine,” answered the page; “I am well able to protect myself against risks of that nature.”

“That is to say,” replied she, “that you would fight with my twin-brother to shew your regard for his sister! I have heard the Queen say, in her sad hours, that men are, in love or in hate, the most selfish animals of creation; and your carelessness in this matter looks very like it. But be not so much abashed—you are no worse than others.”

“You do me injustice, Catherine,” replied the page, “I thought but of being threatened with a sword, and did not remember in whose hand your fancy had placed it. If your brother stood before me, with his drawn weapon in his hand, so like as he is to you in word, person, and favour, he might shed my life's blood: are I could find in my heart to resist him to his injury.”

“Alas!” said she, “it is not my brother alone. But you remember only the singular circumstances in which we have met in equality, and I may say in intimacy. You think not, that whenever I re-enter my father's house, there is a gulf between us you may not pass, but with peril of your life.—Your only known relative is of wild and singular habits, of a hostile and broken clan—the rest of your lineage unknown—forgive me that I speak what is the undeniable truth.”

“Love, my beautiful Catherine, despises genealogies,” answered Roland Græme.

“Love may, but so will not the Lord Seyton, rejoined the damsel.

“The Queen, thy mistress and mine, she will intercede. Oh! drive me not from you at the moment I thought myself most happy!—and if I shall aid her deliverance, said not yourself that you and she would become my debtors?”

“All Scotland will become your debtors,” said Catherine; “but for the active effects you might hope from our gratitude, you must remember I am wholly subjected to my father; and the poor Queen is, for a long time, more likely to be dependant on the pleasure of the nobles of her party, than possessed of power to control them.”

“Be it so,” replied Roland; “my deeds shall control prejudice itself—it is a bustling world, and I will have my share. The Knight of Avenel, high as he now stands, rose from as obscure an origin as mine.”

“Ay!” said Catherine, “there spoke the doughty knight of romance, that will cut his way to the imprisoned princes, through scuffs and fiery dragons!”

“But if I can set the prince at large, and procure her the freedom of her own abbey,” said the page, “where, dearest Catherine, will that choice alight?”

“Release the princess from distress, and she will tell you,” said the damsel; and breaking off the

¹ A broken clan was one who had no chief able to find security for their good behaviour—a clan of outlaws; and the Græmes of the Robards had gone in that condition.

conversation abruptly, she joined the Queen so suddenly, that Mary exclaimed, half aloud —

"No more tidings of evil import—no dismission, I trust, in my limited household!"—Then looking on Catherine's blushing cheek, and Roland's expanded brow and glancing eye—"No—no," she said, "I see all is well—*Ma petite mignone*, go to my apartment and fetch me down—let me see—ay, fetch my pomander box."

And having thus disposed of her attendant in the manner best qualified to hide her confusion, the Queen added, speaking apart to Roland, "I should at least have two grateful subjects of Catherine and you; for what sovereign but Mary would aid true love so willingly!—Ay, you lay your hand on your sword—your *petite flamberg* à rien there—Well, short time will show if all the good be true that is protested to us—I hear them toll curfew from Kinross. To our chamber—this old dame hath promised to be with us again at our evening meal. Were it not for the hope of speedy deliverance, her presence would drive me distracted. But I will be patient."

"I profess," said Catherine, who just then entered, "I would I could be Henry, with all a queen's privileges, for one moment—I long to throw my plate at that confect of pride and formality, and ill-nature."

The Lady Fleming reprimanded her young companion for this explosion of impatience; the Queen laughed, and they went to the presence-chamber, where almost immediately entered supper, and the Lady of the castle. The Queen, strong in her prudent resolutions, endured her presence with great fortitude and equanimity, until her patience was disturbed by a new form, which had hitherto made no part of the ceremonial of the castle. When the other attendant had retired, Roland entered, bearing the keys of the castle fastened upon a chain, and, announcing that the watch was set, and the gates locked, delivered the keys with all reverence to the Lady of Lochleven.

The Queen and her ladies exchanged with each other a look of disappointment, anger, and vexation; and Mary said aloud, "We cannot regret the smallness of our court, when we see our hostess discharge in person so many of its offices. In addition to her charges of principal steward of our household and grand almoner, she has to-night done duty as captain of our guard."

"And will continue to do so in future, madam," answered the Lady Lochleven, with much gravity; "the history of Scotland may teach me how ill the duty is performed, which is done by an accredited deputy—We have heard, madam, of favourites of later date, and as little merit, as Oliver Sinclair."

"Oh, madam," replied the Queen, "my father had his female as well as his male favourites—there were the Ladies Sandilands and Ollivant, and some others, methinks; but their names cannot survive in the memory of a grave person as you."

The Lady Lochleven looked as if she could have slain the Queen on the spot, but commanded her temper, and retired from the apartment, bearing in her hand the ponderous bunch of keys.

"Now God be praised for that woman's youthful

frailty!" said the Queen. "Had she not that weak point in her character, I might waste my words on her in vain—But that stain is the very reverse of what is said of the witch's mark—I can make her feel there, though she is otherwise insensible all over.—But how say you, girls—here is a new difficulty—How are these keys to be come by?—there is no deceiving or bribing this dragon, I trow."

"May I crave to know," said Roland, "whether, if your Grace were beyond the walls of the castle, you could find means of conveyance to the firm land, and protection when you are there?"

"Trust us for that, Roland," said the Queen; "for to that point our scheme is indissoluble well laid."

"Then if your Grace will permit me to speak my mind, I think I could be of some use in this matter."

"As how, my good youth?—speak on," said the Queen, "and fearlessly."

"My patron the Knight of Avenel used to compel the youth educated in his household to learn the use of axe and hammer, and working in wood and iron—he used to speak of old northern champions, who forged their own weapons, and of the Highland Captain, Donald nan Ord, or Donald of the Hammer, whom he himself knew, and who used to work at the anvil with a sledge-hammer in each hand. Some said he praised this art, because he was himself of churl's blood. However, I gained some practice in it, as the Lady Catherine Seyten partly knows; for since we were here, I wrought her a silver brooch."

"Ay," replied Catherine, "but you should tell her Grace that your workmanship was so indifferent that it broke to pieces next day, and I flung it away."

"Believe her not, Roland," said the Queen; "she wept when it was broken, and put the fragments into her bosom. But for your scheme—could your skill avail to forge a second set of keys?"

"No, madam, because I know not the wards. But I am convinced I could make a set so like that hateful bunch which the Lady bore off even now, that could they be exchanged against them by any means, she would never dream she was possessed of the wrong."

"And the good dame, thank Heaven, is somewhat blind," said the Queen; "but then for a forge, my boy, and the means of labouring unobserved?"

"The armourer's forge, at which I used sometimes to work with him, is the round vault at the bottom of the turret—he was dismissed with the warder for being supposed too much attached to George Douglas. The people are accustomed to see me work there, and I warrant I shall find some excuse that will pass current with them for putting bellows and anvil to work."

"The scheme has a promising face," said the Queen; "about it, my lad, with all speed, and beware the nature of your work is not discovered."

"Nay, I will take the liberty to draw the bolt against chance visitors, so that I will have time to put away what I am working upon, before I undo the door."

"Will not that of itself attract suspicion, in a place where it is so current already?" said Catherine.

"Not a whit," replied Roland; "Gregory the armourer, and every good hammerman, looks him- self in when he is about some masterpiece of craft. Besides, something must be risked."

1 A favourite, and said to be an unworthy one, of James V.
2 The names of these ladies, and a third still favourite of James, are preserved in an epigram too gallant for quotation.

"Part we then to-night," said the Queen, "and God bless you, my children! — If Mary's head ever rises above water, you shall all rise along with her."

CHAPTER XXXV.

It is a time of danger, not of revel,
When churchmen turn to masquerade.
Spanish Father.

THIS enterprise of Roland Graine appeared to prosper. A trinket or two, of which the work did not surpass the substance, (for the materials were silver, supplied by the Queen,) were judiciously presented to those most likely to be inquisitive into the labours of the forge and anvil, which they thus were induced to reckon profitable to others and harmless in itself. Openly, the page was seen working about such trifles. In private, he forged a number of keys resembling so nearly in weight and in form those which were presented every evening to the Lady Lochleven, that, on a slight inspection, it would have been difficult to perceive the difference. He brought them to the dark rusty colour by the use of salt and water; and, in the triumph of his art, presented them at length to Queen Mary in her presence-chamber, about an hour before the tolling of the curfew. She looked at them with pleasure, but at the same time with doubt. — "I allow," she said, "that the Lady Lochleven's eyes, which are not of the clearest, may be well deceived, could we pass those keys on her in place of the real impenetrable of her tyranny. But how is this to be done, and which of my little court dare attempt this *tour de jongleur* with any chance of success? Could we but engage her in some earnest matter of argument — but those which I hold with her, always have been of a kind which make her grasp her keys the faster, as if she said to herself — Here I hold what sets me above your taunts and reproaches — And even for her liberty, Mary Stewart could not stoop to speak the proud heretic fair. — What shall we do? Shall Lady Fleming try her eloquence in describing the last new head-tire from Paris! — alas! the good dame has not changed the fashion of her head-gear since Pinkie-field, for aught that I know. Shall my *mignon* Catherine sing to her one of those touching airs, which draw the very souls out of me and Roland Graine? — Alas! Dame Margaret Douglas would rather hear a Huguenot psalm of Clement Marrot, sung to the tune of *Réveilles vous, belle endormie*. — Cousins and liege counsellors, what is to be done, for our wits are really astray in this matter! — Must our main-arms and the champion of our body, Roland Graine, manfully assault the old lady, and take the keys from her *par coté des fait*?"

"Nay! with your Grace's permission," said Roland, "I do not doubt being able to manage the matter with more discretion; for though, in your Grace's service, I do not fear —"

"A host of old women," interrupted Catherine, "each armed with rock and gristle, yet he has no fancy for pikes and partisans, which might rise at the cry of *Hélas! a Douglas, a Douglas!*"

"They that do not fear fair ladies' tongues," continued the page, "need dread nothing else. — But, gracious Liege, I am well-nigh satisfied that I could

pass the exchange of these keys on the Lady Lochleven; but I dread the sentinel who is now planted nightly in the garden, which, by necessity, we must traverse."

"Our last advices from our friends on the shore have promised us assistance in that matter," replied the Queen.

"And is your Grace well assured of the fidelity and watchfulness of those without?"

"For their fidelity, I will answer with my life, and for their vigilance, I will answer with my life — I will give thee instant proof, my faithful Roland, that they are ingenuous and trusty as thyself. Come hither — Nay, Catherine, attend us; we carry not so deft a page into our private chamber alone. Make fast the door of the parlour, Fleming, and warn us if you hear the least step — or stay, go thou to the door, Catherine," (in a whisper, "thy ears and thy wits are both sharper.") — Good Fleming, attend us thyself" — (and again she whispered, "her reverend presence will be as safe a watch on Roland as thine can — so be not jealous, *mignonne*.")

Thus speaking, they were lighted by the Lady Fleming into the Queen's bedroom, a small apartment unlighted by a projecting window.

"Look from that window, Roland," she said, "see you amongst the several lights which begin to kindle, and to glimmer palely through the gray of the evening from the village of Kipross — see! thou, I say, one solitary spark apart from the others, and nearer it seems to the verge of the water! — It is no brighter at this distance than the torch of the poor glow-worm, and yet, my good youth, that light is more dear to Mary Stewart, than every star that twinkles in the blue vault of heaven. By that signal, I know that more than one true heart is plotting my deliverance; and without that consciousness, and the hope of freedom it gives me, I had long since stooped to my fate, and died of a broken heart. Plan after plan has been formed and abandoned, but still the light glimmers; and while it glimmers, my hope lives! — Oh! how many evenings have I sat musing in despair over our ruined schemes, and scarce hoping that I should again see that blessed signal; when it has suddenly kindled, and, like the lights of Saint Elmo in a tempest, brought hope and consolation, where there was only dejection and despair!"

"If I mistake not," answered Roland, "the candle shines from the house of Blackfoolie, the mail-gardener."

"Thou hast a good eye," said the Queen; "it is there where my trusty lieges — God and the saints pour blessings on them! — hold consultation for my deliverance. The voice of a wretched captive would die on these blue waters, long ere it could mingle in their councils; and yet I can hold communication — I will confide the whole to thee — I am about to ask those faithful friends, if the moment for the great attempt is nigh. — Place the lamp in the window, Fleming."

She obeyed, and immediately withdrew it. No sooner had she done so, than the light in the cottage of the gardener disappeared.

"Now, count," said Queen Mary, "for my heart beats so thick that I cannot count myself."

The Lady Fleming began deliberately to count one, two, three, and when she had arrived at ten, the light on the shore again showed its pale twinkle.

"Now, our Lady be praised!" said the Queen;

"It was but two nights since, that the absence of the light remained, while I could tell thirty. The hour of deliverance approached. May God bless those who labour in it with such truth to me!—alas! with such hazard to themselves—and bless you too, my children!—Come, we must to the audience-chamber again. Our absence might excite suspicion, should they serve supper."

They returned to the presence-chamber, and the evening concluded as usual.

The next morning, at dinner-time, an unusual incident occurred. While Lady Douglas of Lochleven performed her daily duty of assistant and taster at the Queen's table, she was told a man-at-arms had arrived, recommended by her son, but without any letter or other token than what he brought by word of mouth.

"Hath he given you that token?" demanded the Lady.

"He reserved it, as I think, for your Ladyship's ear," replied Randal.

"He doth well," said the Lady; "tell him to wait in the hall.—But no—with your permission, madam," (to the Queen) "let him attend me here."

"Since you are pleased to receive your domestics in my presence," said the Queen, "I cannot choose—"

"My infirmities must plead my excuse, madam," replied the Lady; "the life I must lead here ill suits with the years which have passed over my head, and compels me to waive ceremonial."

"Oh, my good Lady," replied the Queen, "I would there were nought in this your castle more strongly compulsive than the cobweb chains of ceremony; but bolts and bars are harder matters to contend with."

As she spoke, the person announced by Randal entered the room, and Roland Græme at once recognised in him the Abbot Ambrosius.

"What is your name, good fellow?" said the Lady.

"Edward Glendinning," answered the Abbot, with a suitable reverence.

"Art thou of the blood of the Knight of Avenel?" said the Lady of Lochleven.

"Ay, madam, and that nearly," replied the pretended soldier.

"It is likely enough," said the Lady, "for the Knight is the son of his own good works, and has risen from obscure beginnings to his present high rank in the Estate.—But he is of sure truth and approved worth, and his kinsman is welcome to us. You hold, unquestionably, the true faith?"

"Do not doubt of it, madam," said the disguised churchman.

"Hast thou a token to me from Sir William Douglas?" said the Lady.

"I have, madam," replied he; "but it must be said in private."

"Thou art right," said the Lady, moving towards the recess of a window; "say in what doest it consist?"

"In the words of an old bard," replied the Abbot.

"Repeat them," answered the Lady; and he uttered, in a low tone, the lines from an old poem, called *The Howlet*,—

"O Douglas! Douglas!
Timber and tree."

"Trusty Sir John Holland!" said the Lady Douglas, apostrophising the poet, "a kinder heart never inspired a rhyme, and the Douglas's honour was ever on thy heart-string! We receive you among our followers, Glendinning.—But, Randal, see that he keep the outer ward only, till we shall hear more touching him from our son.—Thou fearest not the night air, Glendinning?"

"In the cause of the Lady before whom I stand, I fear nothing, madam," answered the disguised Abbot.

"Our garrisons, then, is stronger by one trustworthy soldier," said the matron.—"Go to the buttery, and let them make much of thee."

When the Lady Lochleven had retired, the Queen said to Roland Græme, who was now almost constantly in her company, "I spy comfort in that stranger's countenance; I know not why it should be so, but I am well persuaded he is a friend."

"Your Grace's penetration does not deceive you," answered the page; and he informed her that the Abbot of Saint Mary's himself played the part of the newly arrived soldier.

The Queen crossed herself and looked upwards. "Unworthy sinner that I am," she said, "that for my sake a man so holy, and so high in spiritual office, should wear the garb of a base swarder, and run the risk of dying the death of a traitor!"

"Heaven will protect its own servant, madam," said Catherine Seyton; "his aid would bring a blessing on our undertaking, were it not already blest for its own sake."

"What I admire in my spiritual father," said Roland, "was the steady front with which he looked on me, without giving the least sign of former acquaintance. I did not think the like was possible, since I have ceased to believe that Henry was the same person with Catherine."

"But marked you not how astuciously the good father," said the Queen, "eluded the questions of the woman Lochleven, telling her the very truth, which yet she received not as such?"

Roland thought in his heart, that when the truth was spoken for the purpose of deceiving, it was little better than a lie in disguise. But it was no time to agitate such questions of conscience.

"And now for the signal from the shore," exclaimed Catherine; "my bosom tells me we shall see this night two lights instead of one gleam from that garden of Eden.—And then, Roland, do you play your part manfully, and we will dance on the greensward like midnight fairies!"

Catherine's conjecture misgave not, nor deceived her. In the evening two beams twinkled from the cottage, instead of one; and the page heard, with beating heart, that the new retainer was ordered to stand sentinel on the outside of the castle. When he intimated this news to the Queen, she held her hand out to him—he knelt, and when he raised it to his lips in all dutiful homage, he found it was damp and cold as marble. "For God's sake, madam, droop not now—sink not now!"

"Call upon our Lady, my Lords," said the Lady Fleming.—"call upon your tutelæ saint."

"Call the spirits of the hundred kings you are descended from," exclaimed the page; "in this

Mr John Holland's poem of the *Howlet* is known to collectors by the beautiful edition presented to the Bannatyne Club, by Mr David Laing.

hour of need, the resolution of a monarch were worth the aid of a hundred saints."

"Oh! Roland Græme," said Mary, in a tone of deep despondency, "be true to me—many have been false to me. Alas! I have not always been true to myself. My mind misgives me that I shall die in bondage, and that this bold attempt will cost all our lives. It was foretold me by a sooth-sayer in France, that I should die in prison, and by a violent death, and here comes the hour—Oh, would to God it found me prepared!"

"Madam," said Catherine Seyton, "remember you are a Queen. Better we all died in bravely attempting to gain our freedom, than remained here to be poisoned, as then rid them of the noxious vermin that haunt old houses."

"You are right, Catherine," said the Queen; "and Mary will bear her like herself. But alas! your young and buoyant spirit can ill spell the causes which have broken mine. Forgive me, my children, and farewell for a while—I will prepare both mind and body for this awful venturing."

They separated, till again called together by the tolling of the curfew. The Queen appeared grave, but firm and resolved; the Lady Fleming, with the art of an experienced courtier, knew perfectly how to disguise her inward tremors; Catherine's eye was fired, as if with the boldness of the project, and the half smile which dwelt upon her beautiful mouth seemed to condemn all the risk and all the consequences of discovery; Roland, who felt how much success depended on his own address and boldness, summoned together his whole presence of mind, and if he found his spirits flag for a moment, cast his eye upon Catherine, whom he thought he had never seen look so beautiful.—"I may be foiled," he thought, "but with this reward in prospect, they must bring the devil to bid them ere they cross me." Thus resolved, he stood, like a greyhound in the slips, with hand, heart, and eye intent upon making and seizing opportunity for the execution of their project.

The keys had, with the wonted ceremonial, been presented to the Lady Lochleven. She stood with her back to the casement, which, like that of the Queen's apartment, commanded a view of Kinross, with the church, which stands at some distance from the town, and nearer to the lake, then connected with the town by straggling cottages. With her back to this casement, then, and her face to the table, on which the keys lay for an instant while she tasted the various dishes which were placed there, stood the Lady of Lochleven, more provokingly intent than usual—so at least it seemed to her prisoners—upon the huge and heavy bunch of iron, the implements of their restraint. Just when, having finished her ceremony as taster of the Queen's table, she was about to take up the keys, the page who stood beside her, and had handed her the dishes in succession, looked sideways to the churchyard, and exclaimed he saw corpse-candles in the churchyard. The Lady of Lochleven was not without a touch, though a slight one, of the superstitious of the time; the fate of her sons made her alive to omens, and a corpse-light, as it was called, in the family burial-place, boded death. She turned her head towards the casement—saw a distant glimmering—forgot her charge for one second, and in that second were lost the whole fruits of her former vigilance. The page held the forged

keys under his cloak, and with great dexterity exchanged them for the real ones. His utmost address could not prevent a slight clasp as he took up the latter bunch. "Who touches the keys?" said the Lady; and while the page answered that the sleeve of his cloak had stirred them, she looked round, possessed herself of the bunch which now occupied the place of the genuine keys, and again turned to gaze on the supposed corpse-candles.

"I hold these gleams," she said, after a moment's consideration, "to come, not from the churchyard, but from the hut of the old gardener Blinkhoolie. I wonder what thrift that churl drives, that of late he hath ever had light in his house till the night grew deep. I thought him an industrious, peaceful man—if he turns restorer of idle companions and night-walkers, the place must be rid of him."

"He may work his baskets perchance," said the page, desirous to stop the train of her suspicion.

"Or nets, may he not?" answered the Lady.

"Ay, madam," said Roland, "for trout and salmon."

"Or for fools and knaves," replied the Lady; "but this shall be looked after to-morrow.—I wish your Grace and your company a good evening.—Randal, attend us." And Randal, who waited in the antechamber after having surrendered his bunch of keys, gave his escort to his mistress as usual, while, leaving the Queen's apartments, she retired to her own.

"To-morrow!" said the page, rubbing his hands with glee as he repeated the Lady's last words, "fools look to to-morrow, and wise folk use to-night.—May I pray you, my gracious Liege, to retire for one half hour, until all the castle is composed to rest! I must go and rub with oil these blessed implements of our freedom. Courage and constancy, and all will go well, provided our friends on the shore fail not to send the boat you spoke of."

"Fear them not," said Catherine, "they are true as steel—if our dear mistress do but maintain her noble and royal courage!"

"Doubt not me, Catherine," replied the Queen; "a while since I was overborne, but I have recalled the spirit of my earlier and more sprightly days, when I used to accompany my armed nobles, and wish to be myself a man, to know what life it was to be in the fields with sword and buckler, jack and knapsack."

"Oh, the lark lives not a gayer life, nor sings a lighter and gayer song than the merry soldier," answered Catherine.—"Your Grace shall be in the midst of them soon, and the look of such a liege-Sovereign will make each of your host worth three in the hour of need:—but I must to my task."

"We have but brief time," said Queen Mary; "one of the two lights in the cottage is extinguished—that shows the bolt is put off."

"They will row very slow," said the page, "or kent where depth permits, to avoid men.—To our several tasks—I will commend us, with the good Father."

At the dead hour of midnight, when all was silent in the castle, the page put the key into the lock of the wicket which opened into the garden, and which was at the bottom of a staircase which descended from the Queen's apartment. "Now, turn smooth and softly, then good-bye," said he, "if ever all

softened rust!" and his precautions had been so effectual, that the bolt revolved with little or no sound of resistance. He ventured not to cross the threshold, but exchanging a word with the disguised Abbot, asked if the boat were ready!

"This half hour," said the sentinel. "She lies beneath the wall, too close under the inlet to be seen by the warder, but I fear she will hardly escape his notice in putting off again."

"The darkness," said the page, "and our profound silence, may take her off unobserved, as she came in. Hildebrand has the watch on the tower—a heavy-headed knave, who holds a can of ale to be the best headpiece upon a night-watch. He sleeps for a wager."

"Then bring the Queen," said the Abbot, "and I will call Henry Seyton to assist them to the boat."

On tiptoe, with noiseless step and suppressed breath, trembling at every rustle of their own apparel, one after another the fair prisoners glided down the winding stair, under the guidance of Roland Græme, and were received at the wicket-gate by Henry Seyton and the churchman. The former seemed instantly to take upon himself the whole direction of the enterprise. "My Lord Abbot," he said, "give my sister your arm—I will conduct the Queen—and that youth will have the honour to guide Lady Fleming."

This was no time to dispute the arrangement, although it was not that which Roland Græme would have chosen. Catherine Seyton, who well knew the garden path, tripped on before like a sylph, rather leading the Abbot than receiving assistance—the Queen, her native spirit prevailing over female fear, and a thousand painful reflections, moved steadily forward, by the assistance of Henry Seyton—while the Lady Fleming encumbered with her fears and her helplessness Roland Græme, who followed in the rear, and who bore under the other arm a packet of necessities belonging to the Queen. The door of the garden, which communicated with the shore of the inlet, yielded to one of the keys of which Roland had possessed himself, although not until he had tried several,—a moment of anxious terror and expectation. The ladies were then partly led, partly carried, to the side of the lake, where a boat with six rowers attended them, the men crouched along the bottom to secure them from observation. Henry Seyton placed the Queen in the stern; the Abbot offered to assist Catherine, but she was seated by the Queen's side before he could utter his proffer of help; and Roland Græme was just lifting Lady Fleming over the boat-side, when a thought suddenly occurred to him, and exclaiming, "Forgotten, forgotten! wait for me but one half minute," he replaced on the shore the helpless Lady of the bed-chamber, threw the Queen's packet into the boat, and sped back through the garden with the noiseless speed of a bird on the wing.

"By Heaven, he is false at last!" said Seyton; "I ever feared it!"

"He is as true," said Catherine, "as Heaven itself, and that I will maintain."

"Be silent, maiden," said her brother, "for shame, if not for fear—Follow, put off, and row for your lives!"

"Help me, help me on board!" said the deserted Lady Fleming, and that louder than prudence warranted.

"Put off—put off!" cried Henry Seyton; "leave all behind, so the Queen is safe."

"Will you permit this, madam!" said Catherine, imploringly; "you leave your deliverer to death."

"I will not," said the Queen.—"Seyton, I command you to stay at every risk."

"Pardon me, madam, if I disobey," said the intractable young man; and with one hand lifting in Lady Fleming, he began himself to push off the boat.

She was two fathoms' length from the shore, and the rowers were getting her head round, when Roland Græme, arriving, bounded from the beach, and attained the boat, overturning Seyton, on whom he lighted. The youth swore a deep but suppressed oath, and stopping Græme as he stepped towards the stern said, "Your place is not with high-born dames—keep at the head and trim the vessel—Now give way—give way—Row, for God and the Queen!"

The rowers obeyed, and began to pull vigorously.

"Why did ye not muffle the oars!" said Roland Græme; "the dash must awaken the sentinel—Row, lads, and get out of reach of shot; for had not old Hildebrand, the warder, supped upon poppy-porgidge, this whispering must have waked him."

"It was all thine own delay," said Seyton; "thou shalt reckon with me hereafter for that and other matters."

But Roland's apprehension was verified too instantly to permit him to reply. The sentinel, whose slumbering had withstood the whispering, was alarmed by the dash of the oars. His challenge was instantly heard. "A boat—a boat!—bring to, or I shoot!" And, as they continued to ply their oars, he called aloud, "Treason! treason!" rung the bell of the castle, and discharged his harquebuses at the boat. The ladies crowded on each other like startled wild-fowl, at the flash and report of the piece, while the men urged the rowers to the utmost speed. They heard more than one ball whiz along the surface of the lake, at no great distance from their little bark; and from the lights, which glimmed like meteors from window to window, it was evident the whole castle was alarmed, and their escape discovered.

"Pull!" again exclaimed Seyton; "stretch to your oars, or I will spur you to the task with my dagger—they will launch a boat immediately."

"That is cared for," said Roland; "I looked gate and wicket on them when I went back, and no boat will stir from the island this night, if doors of good oak and bolts of iron can keep men within stone-walls.—And now I resign my office of porter of Lochleven, and give the keys to the Kelpie's keeping."

As the heavy keys plunged in the lake, the Abbot, who till then had been repeating his prayers, exclaimed, "Now, bless thee, my son! for thy ready prudence puts shame on us all!"

"I knew," said Mary, drawing her breath more freely, as they were now out of reach of the murther—"I knew my squire's truth, promptitude, and sagacity—I must have him dear friends with my no less true knights, Douglas and Seyton—but where, that, is Douglas?"

"Here, madam," answered the deep and melan-

choy voice of the boatman who sat next her, and who acted as steersman.

"Alas! was it you who stretched your body before me," said the Queen, "when the balls were raining around us?"

"Believe you," said he, in a low tone, "that Douglas would have resigned to any one the chance of protecting his Queen's life with his own!"

The dialogue was here interrupted by a shot or two from one of those small pieces of artillery called falconets, then used in defending castles. The shot was too vague to have any effect, but the brighter flash, the deeper sound, the louder return which was made by the midnight echoes of Benarty, terrified and imposed silence on the liberated prisoners. The boat was alongside of a rude quay or landing-place, running out from a garden of considerable extent, ere any of them again attempted to speak. They landed, and while the Abbot returned thanks aloud to Heaven, which had thus far favoured their enterprise, Douglas enjoyed the best reward of his desperate undertaking, in conducting the Queen to the house of the gardener. Yet, not unmindful of Roland Graeme even in that moment of terror and exhaustion, Mary expressly commanded Seyton to give his assistance to Fleming, while Catherine voluntarily, and without bidding, took the arm of the page. Seyton presently resigned Lady Fleming to the care of the Abbot, alleging, he must look after their horses; and his attendants, disencumbering themselves of their boat-cloaks, hastened to assist him.

While Mary spent in the gardener's cottage the few minutes which was necessary to prepare the steeds for their departure, she perceived, in a corner, the old man to whom the garden belonged, and called him to approach. He came as it were with reluctance.

"How, brother," said the Abbot, "so slow to welcome the royal Queen and mistress to liberty and to her kingdom!"

The old man, thus admonished, came forward, and, in good terms of speech, gave her Grace joy of her deliverance. The Queen returned him thanks in the most gracious manner, and added, "It will remain to us to offer some immediate reward for your fidelity, for we wot well your house has been long the refuge in which our trusty servants have met to concert measures for our freedom." So saying, she offered gold, and added, "We will consider your services more fully hereafter."

"Kneel, brother," said the Abbot, "kneel instantly, and thank her Grace's kindness."

"Good brother, that wert once a few steps under me, and art still many years younger," replied the gardener, pettishly, "let me do mine acknowledgments in my own way. Queens have knelt to me ere now, and in truth my knees are too old and stiff to bend even to this lovely-faced lady. May it please your Grace, if your Grace's servants have occupied my house, so that I could not call it mine own—if they have trodden down my flowers in the seal of their midnight comings and goings, and destroyed the hope of the fruit-season, by bringing their war horses into my garden, I do but crave of your Grace in requital, that you will choose your residence as far from me as possible. I am an old man, who would willingly creep to my grave as easily as he can, in peace, good-will, and quiet labour."

"I promise you fairly, good man," said the Queen. "I will not make yonder castle my residence again, if I can help it. But let me press on you this money—it will make some amends for the havoc we have made in your little garden and orchard."

"I thank your Grace, but it will make me not the least amends," said the old man. "The ruined labours of a whole year are not so easily replaced to him who has perchance but that one year to live; and besides, they tell me I must leave this place and become a wanderer in mine old age—I that have nothing on earth saving these fruit-trees, and a few old parchments and family secrets not worth knowing. As for gold, if I had loved it, I might have remained Lord Abbot of Saint Mary's—and yet, I wot not—for, if Abbot Boniface be but the poor peasant Blinckhoolie, his successor, the Abbot Ambrosius, is still transmuted for the worse into the guise of a sword-and-buckler-man."

"Is this indeed the Abbot Boniface of whom I have heard?" said the Queen. "It is indeed I who should have bent the knee for your blessing, good Father."

"Bend no knee to me, Lady! The blessing of an old man, who is no longer an Abbot, go with you, over dale and down—I hear the trampling of your horses."

"Farewell, Father," said the Queen. "When we are once more seated at Holyrood, we will neither forget thee nor thine injured garden."

"Forget us both," said the Ex-Abbot Boniface, "and may God be with you!"

As they hurried out of the house, they heard the old man talking and muttering to himself, as he hastily drew bolt and bar behind them.

"The revenge of the Douglasses will reach the poor old man," said the Queen. "God help me, I ruin every one whom I approach!"

"His safety is cared for," said Seyton; "he must not remain here, but will be privately conducted to a place of greater security. But I would your Grace were in the saddle.—To horse! to horse!"

The party of Seyton and of Douglas were increased to about ten by those attendants who had remained with the horses. The Queen and her ladies, with all the rest who came from the boat, were instantly mounted; and holding aloof from the village, which was already alarmed by the firing from the castle, with Douglas acting as their guide, they soon reached the open ground and began to ride as fast as was consistent with keeping together in good order.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

He mounted himself on a speck-black steed,
And her on a freckled grey,
With a bugle horn hung down from his side,
And roundly they rode away.

Edinburgh.

THE influence of the free air, the ringing of the horses over high and low, the ringing of the bridles, the excitement at once arising from a sense of freedom and of rapid motion, gradually dispelled the confused and dejected sort of suspension by which Queen Mary was at first overwhelmed. She could not at last conceal the change of her feelings to the person who rode at her side, and who she doubted not was the Father Ambrosius; for Seyton, with

all the heady impetuosity of a youth, proud, and justly so, of his first successful adventure, assumed all the bustle and importance of commander of the little party, which escorted, in the language of the time, the Fortune of Scotland. He now led the van, now checked his bounding steed till the roar had come up, exhorted the leaders to keep a steady, though rapid pace, and commanded those who were hindmost of the party to use their spurs, and allow no interval to take place in their line of march; and anon he was beside the Queen, or her ladies, inquiring how they brooked the hasty journey, and whether they had any commands for him. But while Seyton thus busied himself in the general cause with some advantage to the regular order of the march, and a good deal of personal ostentation, the horseman who rode beside the Queen gave her his full and undivided attention, as if he had been waiting upon some superior being. When the road was rugged and dangerous, he abandoned almost entirely the care of his own horse, and kept his hand constantly upon the Queen's bridle; if a river or larger brook traversed their course, his left arm retained her in the saddle, while his right held her palfrey's rein.

"I had not thought, reverend Father," said the Queen, when they reached the other bank, "that the convent bred such good horsemen."—The person she addressed sighed, but made no other answer.—"I know not how it is," said Queen Mary, "but either the sense of freedom, or the pleasure of my favourite exercise, from which I have been so long debarred, or both combined, seem to have given wings to me—no fish ever shot through the water, no bird through the air, with the hurried feeling of liberty and rapture with which I sweep through this night-wind, and over these woods. Nay, such is the magic of feeling myself once more in the saddle, that I could almost swear I am at this moment mounted on my own favourite Rosabelle, who was never matched in Scotland for swiftness, for ease of motion, and for sureness of foot."

"And if the horse which bears so dear a burden could speak," answered the deep voice of the melancholy George of Douglas, "would she not reply, who but Rosabelle sought at such an emergence as this to serve her beloved mistress, or who but Douglas ought to hold her bridle-rein?"

Queen Mary started; she foresaw at once all the evils like to arise to herself and him from the deep enthusiastic passion of this youth; but her feelings as a woman, grateful at once and compassionate, prevented her assuming the dignity of a Queen, and she endeavoured to continue the conversation in an indifferent tone.

"Methinks," she said, "I heard that, at the division of my spoils, Rosabelle had become the property of Lord Morton's paramour and lady-love, Alice."

"The noble palfrey had indeed been destined to no base a fate," answered Douglas; "she was kept under her own name, and under the charge of a numerous crew of grooms and domestics—but Queen Mary needed Rosabelle, and Rosabelle is here."

"And was it you, Douglas," said Queen Mary, "when such rapid rides of various kinds must needs be encountered, that you should augment their peril to yourself, for a subject of so little moment as a palfrey?"

"Do you call that a trifling moment?" answered

Douglas, "which has afforded you a moment's pleasure?—Did you not start with joy when I first told you were mounted on Rosabelle?—And to purchase you that pleasure, though it were to last no longer than the flash of lightning doth, would not Douglas have risked his life a thousand times?"

"Oh, peace, Douglas, peace," said the Queen, "this is unfitting language; and, besides, I would speak," said she, recollecting herself, "with the Abbot of Saint Mary's—Nay, Douglas, I will not let you quit my rein in displeasure."

"Displeasure, lady?" answered Douglas; "alas! sorrow is all that I can feel for your well-warranted contentment—I should be, as soon displeased with Heaven for refusing the wildest wish which mortal can form."

"Abide by my rein, however," said Mary, "there is room for my Lord Abbot on the other side; and, besides, I doubt if his assistance would be so useful to Rosabelle and me as yours has been, should the road again require it."

The Abbot came up on the other side, and she immediately opened a conversation with him on the topic of the state of parties, and the plan fittest for her to pursue in consequence of her deliverance. In this conversation Douglas took little share, and never but when directly applied to by the Queen, while, as before, his attention seemed entirely engrossed by the care of Mary's personal safety. She learned, however, she had a few obligations to him, since, by his contrivance, the Abbot, whom he had furnished with the family pass-word, was introduced into the castle as one of the garrison.

Long before daybreak they ended their hasty and perilous journey before the gates of Niddrie, a castle in West Lothian, belonging to Lord Seyton. When the Queen was about to alight, Henry Seyton, preventing Douglas, received her in his arms, and, kneeling down, prayed her Majesty to enter the house of his father, her faithful servant.

"Your Grace," he added, "may repose yourself here in perfect safety—it is already garrisoned with good men for your protection; and I have sent a post to my father, whose instant arrival, at the head of five hundred men, may be looked for. Do not dismay yourself, therefore, should your sleep be broken by the trampling of horses; but only think that here are some scores more of the steepest Seytons come to attend you."

"And by better friends than the Sney Seytons, a Scottish Queen cannot be guarded," replied Mary.

"Rosabelle went fleet as the summer breeze, and well-nigh as easy—but it is long since I have been a traveller, and I feel that repose will be welcome.—Catherine, no nightgown, you must sleep in my apartment to-night, and bid me welcome to your noble father's castle.—Thanks, thanks to all my kind deliverers—thanks, and a good night to all. I can now offer; but if I think once there is the upper side of Fortune's wheel, I will not leave her bandage. Mary Stewart will keep her eyes open, and distinguish her friends. L. Seyton, I most warmly recommend the venerable Abbot, the Douglas, and my page, to your commendable care and hospitality."

Henry Seyton bowed, and Catherine and Lady Fleming attended the Queen to her apartment; where, acknowledging to them that she should have found it difficult in that moment to keep her promise of holding her eyes open, she retired to rest.

to repose, and awakened not till the morning was advanced.

Mary's first feeling when she awoke, was the doubt of her freedom; and the impulse prompted her to start from bed, and hastily throwing her mantle over her shoulders, to look out at the casement of her apartment. Oh, sight of joy! instead of the crystal sheet of Lochleven, unaltered save by the influence of the wind, a landscape of wood and moorland lay before her, and the park around the castle was occupied by the troops of her most faithful and most favourite nobles.

"Rise, rise, Catherine," cried the enraptured Prince; "arise and come hither!—here are swords and spears in thine hands, and glittering armour on loyal breasts. Here are banners, my girl, floating in the wind, as lightly as summer clouds—Great God! what pleasure to my weary eyes to trace their devices—thine own brave father's—the princely Hamilton's—the faithful Fleming's—See—see they have caught a glimpse of me, and throng towards the window!"

She flung the casement open, and with her bare head, from which the tresses flew back loose and dishevelled, her fair arm slenderly veiled by her mantle, returned by motion and sign the exulting shouts of the warriors, which echoed for many a furlong around. When the first burst of ecstatic joy was over, she recollected how lightly she was dressed, and, putting her hands to her face, which was covered with blushes at the recollection, withdrew abruptly from the window. The cause of her retreat was easily conjectured, and increased the general enthusiasm for a Princess, who had forgotten her rank in her haste to acknowledge the services of her subjects. The unadorned beauties of the lovely woman, too, moved the military spectators more than the highest display of her regal state might; and what might have seemed too free in her mode of appearing before them, was more than atoned for by the enthusiasm of the moment, and by the delicacy evinced in her hasty retreat. Often as the shouts died away, as often were they renewed till wood and hill rung again; and many a deep oath was made that morning on the cross of the sword, that the hand should not part with the weapon, till Mary Stewart was restored to her rights. But what are promises, what the hopes of mortals? In ten days, these gallant and devoted votaries were slain, were captives, or had fled.

Mary flung herself into the nearest seat, and still blushing, yet half smiling, exclaimed—"My signés, what will they think of me!—to shew myself to them with my bare feet hastily thrust into the slippers—only this loose mantle about me—my hair loose on my shoulders—my arms and neck so bare—Oh, the best they can suppose is, that her shade in yonder dungeon has turned their Queen's brain! But my rebel subjects saw me exposed when I was in the depth of affliction, why should I hold colder ceremony with these faithful and loyal men!—Call Fleming, however—I trust she has not forgotten the little mail with my apparel—We must be as brave as we can, *mes amis*."

"Nay, madam, our good Lady Fleming was in no way to remember any thing."

"You jest, Catherine," said the Queen, somewhat offended; "it is not in her nature, surely, to forget her duty so far as to leave us without a change of apparel?"

"Roland Greeme, madam, took care of that," answered Catherine; "for he threw the mail, with your highness's clothes and jewels, into the boat, ere he ran back to lock the gate—I never saw so awkward a page as that youth—the packet well-nigh fell on my head."

"He shall make thy heart amends, my girl," said Queen Mary, laughing, "for that and all other offences given. But call Fleming, and let us put ourselves into apparel to meet our faithful lords."

Such had been the preparations, and such was the skill of Lady Fleming, that the Queen appeared before her assembled nobles in such attire as became, though it could not enhance, her natural dignity. With the most winning courtesy, she expressed to each individual her grateful thanks, and dignified not only every noble, but many of the lesser barons by her particular attention.

"And whither now, my lords?" she said; "what way do your counsels determine for us?"

"To Drapane Castle, replied Lord Arbroath, "if your Majesty is so pleased; and thence to Dunbarton, to place your Grace's person in safety, after which we long to prove if these traitors will abide us in the field."

"And when do we journey?"

"We propose," said Lord Seyton, "if your Grace's fatigue will permit, to take horse after the morning's meal."

"Your pleasure, my lords, is mine," replied the Queen; "we will rule our journey by your wisdom now, and hope hereafter to have the advantage of governing by it our kingdom.—You will permit my ladies and me, my good lords, to break our fasts along with you.—We must be half soldiers ourselves, and set state apart."

Low bowed many a helmeted head at this gracious proffer, when the Queen, glancing her eyes through the assembled leaders, missed both Douglas and Roland Greeme, and inquired for them in a whisper to Catherine Seyton.

"They are in yonder oratory, madam, sad enough," replied Catherine; and the Queen observed that her favourite's eyes were red with weeping.

"This must not be," said the Queen. "Keep the company amused—I will seek them, and introduce them myself."

She went into the oratory, where the first she met was George Douglas, standing, or rather reclining, in the recess of a window, his back rested against the wall, and his arms folded on his breast. At the sight of the Queen he started, and his countenance shewed, for an instant, an expression of intense delight, which was instantly exchanged for his usual deep melancholy.

"What meant this?" she said; "Douglas, why does the first deviser and bold executioner of the happy scheme for our freedom, turn the company of his fellow-nobles, and of the Sovereign whom he has obliged?"

"Madam," replied Douglas, "when you grace with your presence this fellowship to aid your cause, wealth to support your aims,—an offer you baffle in which to stand and impenetrable shield for your defence. I am a lowly and tender man—dismembered by my wounds, and left under her malédiction—deserted by my name and kindred—who being nothing in your estimation but a single sword, and the price of it in your hands."

"Do you mean to upbraid me, Douglas," replied the Queen, "by shewing what you have lost for my sake?"

"God forbid, madam!" interrupted the young man, eagerly; "were it to do again, and had I ten times as much rank and wealth, and twenty times as many friends to lose, my losses would be over-paid by the first step you made, as a free princess, upon the soil of your native kingdom."

"And what then sirs you, that you will not rejoice with those who rejoice upon the same joyful occasion?" said the Queen.

"Madam," replied the youth, "though exheriated and disowned, I am yet a Douglas: with most of yonder nobles my family have been in feud for ages—a cold reception amongst them were an insult, and a kind one yet more humiliating."

"For shame, Douglas," replied the Queen, "shake off this unmanly gloom!—I can shake thee match for the best of them in title and fortune, and, believe me, I will.—Go then amongst them, I command you."

"That word," said Douglas, "is enough—I go. This only let me say, that not for wealth or title would I have done that which I have done—Mary Stewart will not, and the Queen cannot, reward me."

So saying, he left the oratory, mingled with the nobles, and placed himself at the bottom of the table. The Queen looked after him, and put her kerchief to her eyes.

"Now, Our Lady pity me," she said, "for no sooner are my prison cares ended, than those which beset me as a woman and a queen again thicken around me.—Happy Elizabeth! to whom political interest is every thing, and whose heart never betrays thy head.—And now must I seek this other boy, if I would prevent dagger-drawing betwixt him and the young Seyton."

Roland Grange was in the same oratory; but at such a distance from Douglas, that he could not overhear what passed betwixt the Queen and him. He also was musing and thoughtful, but cleared his brow at the Queen's question, "How now, Roland? you are negligent in your attendance this morning. Are you so much concerned with your night's ride?"

"Not so, gracious madam," answered Grange; "but I am told the Page of Lochleven is not the Page of Niddrie-Castle; and so Master Henry Seyton hath in a manner been pleased to supersede my attendance."

"Now, Heaven forgive me," said the Queen, "how soon these cock-shickens begin to spar!—with children and boys, at least, I may be a queen.—I will have you friends.—Come one and me Henry Seyton rather." As she spoke the last words aloud, the youth whom she had named entered the apartment. "Come hither," she said, "Henry Seyton—I will have you give your hand to this youth, who is well aided in the plan of my escape."

"With pleasure, madam," answered Seyton, "so that the youth will grant me, as a boon, that he touch not the hand of another person whom he knows of. My hand has never crossed the hand with him before now—and, for my friendship, he must give up thoughts of my escape's love."

"Henry," said the Queen, "does it become you and my children to my command?"

"Madam," said Henry, "I am the servant of your Grace's throne, and in the most loyal man in

Scotland. Our goods, our castles, our blood, are yours: Our honour is in our own keeping. I could say more, but——"

"Nay, speak on, rude boy," said the Queen; "what avails it that I am released from Lochleven, if I am thus enthralled under the yoke of my pretended deliverers, and prevented from doing justice to one who has deserved as well of me as yourself?"

"Be not in this distemperature for me, sovereign Lady," said Roland; "this young gentleman, being the faithful servant of your Grace, and the brother of Catherine Seyton, bears that about him which will charm down my passion at the hottest."

"I warn thee once more," said Henry Seyton, haughtily, "that you make no speech which may infer that the daughter of Lord Seyton can be taught to these beyond what she is to every churl's blood in Scotland."

The Queen was again about to interfere, for Roland's complexion rose, and it became somewhat questionable how long his love for Catherine would suppress the natural fire of his temper. But the interposition of another person, hitherto unseen, prevented Mary's interference. There was in the oratory a separate shrine, enclosed with a high screen of pierced oak, within which was placed an image of Saint Bennet, of peculiar sanctity. From this recess, in which she had been probably engaged in her devotions, issued suddenly Magdalen Grange, and addressed Henry Seyton, in reply to his last offensive expressions.—"And of what clay, then, are they moulded these Seytons, that the blood of the Granges may not aspire to mingle with theirs? Know, proud boy, that when I call this youth my daughter's child, I affirm his descent from Malise Earl of Strathern, called Malise with the Bright Brand; and I trow the blood of your house springs from no higher source."

"Good mother," said Seyton, "methinks your sanctity should make you superior to these worldly vanities; and indeed it seems to have rendered you somewhat oblivious touching them, since, to be of gentle descent, the father's name and lineage must be as well qualified as the mother's."

"And if I say he comes of the blood of Avenel by the father's side," replied Magdalen Grange, "name I not blood as richly coloured as thine own?"

"Of Avenel?" said the Queen; "is my page descended of Avenel?"

"Ay, gracious Princess, and the last male heir of that ancient house—Julian Avenel was his father, who fell in battle against the Southron."

"I have heard the tale of sorrow," said the Queen; "it was thy daughter, then, who followed that unfortunate baron to the field, and died on his body! Alas! how many ways does woman's affection find to work out her own misery! The tale has oft been told and sung in hall and bower.—And thou, Roland, art that child of misfortune, who was left among the dead and dying! Henry Seyton, he is thine equal in blood and birth."

"Scarcely so," said Henry Seyton, "even were he legitimate; but if the tale be told and sung aright, Julian Avenel was a false knight, and his lesser a knave and creditless maiden."

"Now, by Heaven, then, that!" said Roland Grange, and laid his hand on his sword. The entrance of Lord Seyton, however, prevented violence.

"Save me, my lord," said the Queen, "and keep rate these wild and untamed spirits."

"How Henry," said the baron, "are my castle, and the Queen's presence, no checks on thine insolence and impetuosity?—And with whom art thou brawling?—unless my eyes spell that token false, it is with the very youth who aided me so gallantly in the skirmish with the Leslies—Let me look, fair youth, at the medal which thou wearst in thy cap. By Saint Bennet, it is the same!—Henry, I command thee to forbear him, as thou lovest my blessing."

"And as you honour my command," said the Queen; "good service hath he done me."

"Ay, madam," replied young Seyton, "as when he carried the billet enclosed in the sword-sheath to Lochleven—marry, the good youth knew no more than a pack-horse what he was carrying."

"But I who dedicated him to this great work," said Magdalen Grème—I, by whose advice and agency this just heir hath been unloosed from her thralldom—I, who spared not the last remaining hope of a fallen house in this great action—I, at least, knew and counselled; and what merit may be mine, let the reward, most gracious Queen, descend upon this youth. My ministry, here is ended; you are free—a sovereign Princess, at the head of a gallant army, surrounded by valiant barons—My service could avail you no farther, but might well prejudice you; your fortune now rests upon men's hearts and men's swords—May they prove as trusty as the faith of women!"

"You will not leave us, mother," said the Queen—"you whose practices in our favour were so powerful, who dared so many dangers, and wore so many disguises, to blind our enemies and confirm our friends—you will not leave us in the dawn of our reviving fortunes, ere we have time to know and to thank you?"

"You cannot know her," answered Magdalen Grème, "who knows not herself—there are times, when, in this woman's frame of mind, there is the strength of him of Gath—in this overtoiled brain, the wisdom of the most sage counsellor—and again the mist is on me, and my strength is weakness, my wisdom folly. I have spoken before princes and cardinals—Aye, noble Princess, even before the princes of thine own house of Lorraine; and I know not whence the words of persuasion came which flowed from my lips, and were drunk in by their ears.—And now, even when I most need words of persuasion, there is something which chokes my voice, and robs me of utterance."

"If there be aught in my power to do thee pleasure," said the Queen, "the barely naming it shall avail as well as all thine eloquence."

"Sovereign Lady," replied the enthusiast, "it shames me that at this high moment something of human frailty should cling to one, whose vows the saints have heard, whose labours in the rightful cause Heaven has prospered. But it will be thus while the living spirit is shrouded in the clay of mortality—I will yield to the folly," she said, weeping as she spoke, "and it shall be the last." Then, seizing Roland's hand, she led him to the Queen's feet, kneeling herself upon one knee, and causing him to kneel on both. "Mighty Princess," she said, "look on this flower—it was found by a stranger on a bloody field of battle, and when I saw my anxious eyes saw, and my arms

pressed, all that was left of my only daughter. For your sake, and for that of the holy faith we both profess, I could leave this plant, while it was yet tender, to the nurture of strangers—ay, of enemies, by whom, perchance, his blood would have been poured forth as wine, had the heretic Glendinning known that he had in his house the heir of Julian Avenel. Since then I have seen him only in a few hours of doubt and dread, and now I part with the child of my love—for ever—for ever!—Oh, for every weary step I have made in your rightful cause, in this and in foreign lands, give protection to the child whom I must no more call mine!"

"I swear to you, mother," said the Queen, deeply affected, "that, for your sake and his own, his happiness and fortunes shall be our charge!"

"I thank you, daughter of princes," said Magdalen, and pressed her lips, first to the Queen's hand, then to the brow of her grandson. "And now," she said, drying her tears, and rising with dignity, "Earth has had its own, and Heaven claims the rest.—Lioness of Scotland, go forth and conquer! and if the prayers of a devoted votress can avail thee, they will rise in many a land, and from many a distant shrine. I will glide like a ghost from land to land, from temple to temple; and where the very name of my country is unknown, the priests shall ask who is the Queen of that distant northern land, for whom the aged pilgrim was so fervent in prayer. Farewell! Honour be thine, and earthly prosperity, if it be the will of God—if not, may the penance thou shalt do here ensure thee happiness hereafter!—Let no one speak or follow me—my resolution is taken—my vow cannot be cancelled."

She glided from their presence as she spoke, and her last look was upon her beloved grandchild. He would have risen and followed, but the Queen and Lord Seyton interfered.

"Press not on her now," said Lord Seyton, "if you would not lose her for ever. Many a time have we seen the sainted mother, and often at the most needful moment; but to press on her privacy, or to thwart her purpose, is a crime which she cannot pardon. I trust we shall yet see her at her need—a holy woman she is for certain, and dedicated wholly to prayer and penance; and hence the heretics hold her as one distracted, while true Catholics deem her a saint."

"Let me then hope," said the Queen, "that you, my lord, will aid me in the execution of her last request."

"What! in the protection of my young second?—cheerfully—that, in all that your majesty can think fit, sitting to ask of me.—Henry, give thy hand upon the instant to Roland Avenel, for so I presume he must now be called."

"And shall be Lord of the Barony," said the Queen, "if God prosper our rightful aims."

"It can only be to restore it to my dear protectress, who now holds it," said young Avenel. "I would rather be landless all my life, than she lost a rood of ground by me."

"Nay," said the Queen, looking to Lord Seyton, "his mind matches his birth.—Henry, thou hast not yet given thy hand."

"It is his," said Henry, springing up with some appearance of sourness, and whispering to Roland at the same time,—"For all this, thou hast not my sister's."

"May it please your Grace," said Lord Seyton, "now that these passages are over, to honour our poor meal. Time it were that our banners were reflected in the Clyde. We must to horse with as little delay as may be."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Ay, ah — our ancient crown, in these wild times,
Oft stood upon a crest — the gambler's dust,
So often staked, and lost, and then again 'd,
Scarcely known as they hamper'd. *The Spanish Father.*

It is not our object to enter into the historical part of the reign of the ill-fated Mary, or to recount how, during the week which succeeded her flight from Lochleven, her partisans mustered around her with their followers, forming a gallant army, amounting to six thousand men. So much light has been lately thrown on the most minute details of the period, by Mr Chalmers, in his valuable History of Queen Mary, that the reader may be safely referred to it for the fullest information which ancient records afford concerning that interesting time. It is sufficient for our purpose to say, that while Mary's head-quarters were at Hamilton, the Regent and his adherents had, in the King's name, assembled a host at Glasgow, inferior indeed to that of the Queen in numbers, but formidable from the military talents of Murray, Morton, the Laird of Grange, and others, who had been trained from their youth in foreign and domestic wars.

In these circumstances, it was the obvious policy of Queen Mary to avoid a conflict, secure that were her person once in safety, the number of her adherents must daily increase; whereas, the forces of those opposed to her must, as had frequently happened in the previous history of her reign, have diminished, and their spirits become broken. And so evident was this to her counsellors, that they resolved their first step should be to place the Queen in the strong castle of Dunbarton, there to await the course of events, the arrival of succours from France, and the levies which were made by her adherents in every province of Scotland. Accordingly, orders were given, that all men should be on horseback or on foot, appared in their armour, and ready to follow the Queen's standard, in array of battle, the avowed determination being to escort her to the castle of Dunbarton in defiance of her enemies.

The muster was made upon Hamilton-Moor, and the march commenced in all the pomp of feudal times. Military music sounded, banners and pennons waved, armour glittered far and wide, and spears glanced and twinkled like stars in a frosty sky. The gallant spectacle of warlike parade was on this occasion, dignified by the presence of the Queen herself, who, with a fair retinue of ladies and household attendants, and a special guard of gentlemen, amongst whom young Seyton and Roland were distinguished, gave grace at once and confidence to the army which spread its ample files before, around, and behind her. Many Churchmen also joined the cavalcade, most of whom did not scruple to assume arms, and declare their intention of wishing them in defence of Mary and the

Catholic faith. Not so the Abbot of Saint Mary's. Roland had not seen this prelate since the night of their escape from Lochleven, and he now beheld him, robed in the dress of his order, assume his station near the Queen's person. Roland hastened to pull off his helmet, and beseech the Abbot's blessing.

"Thou hast it, my son!" said the priest; "I see thee now under thy true name, and in thy rightful garb. The helmet with the holly-branch besets your brows well — I have long waited for the hour thou shouldst assume it."

"Then you knew of my descent, my good father!" said Roland.

"I did so, but it was under seal of confession from thy grandmother; nor was I at liberty to tell the secret, till she herself should make it known."

"Her reason for such secrecy, my father!" said Roland Avenel.

"Yea, perchance, of my brother — a mistaken fear, for Halbert would not, to ensure himself a kingdom, have offered wrong to an orphan; besides that, your title, in quiet times, even had your father done your mother that justice which I well hope he did, could not have competed with that of my brother's wife, the child of Julian's elder brother."

"They need fear no competition from me," said Avenel. "Scotland is wide enough, and there are many manors to win, without plundering my benefactor. But prove to me, my reverend father, that my father was just to my mother — shew me that I may call myself a legitimate Avenel, and make me your bounden slave for ever."

"Ay," replied the Abbot, "I hear the Seytons hold thee cheap for that stain on thy shield. Something, however, I have learnt from the late Abbot Boniface, which, if it prove sooth, may redeem that reproach."

"Tell me that blessed news," said Roland, "and the future service of my life —"

"Rash boy!" said the Abbot, "I should but madden thine impatient temper, by exciting hopes that may never be fulfilled — and is this a time for them! Think on what perilous march we are bound, and if thou hast a sin unconfessed, neglect not the only leisure which Heaven may perchance afford thee for confession and absolution."

"There will be time enough for both, I trust, when we reach Dunbarton," answered the page.

"Ay," said the Abbot, "thou crowest as loudly as the rest — but we are not yet at Dunbarton, and there is a lion in the path."

"Mean you Murray, Morton, and the other rebels at Glasgow, my reverend father! Tush! they dare not look on the royal banner."

"Even so," replied the Abbot, "speak many of those who are older, and should be wiser, than thou. — I have returned from the southern shires, where I left many a chief of name serving in the Queen's interest — I left the lords here wise and considerate men — I find them madmen on my return — they are willing, for mere pride and valour, to leave the money, and to carry the Queen, as it were in triumph, past the walls of Glasgow, and under the hands of the adverse army. — Surely does Heaven smile on such mistaken confidence. We shall be encountered, and that to the purpose."

"And so much the better," replied Roland, "the field of battle was my uncle's."

"Beware it be not thy dying bed," said the Abbot. "But what avails it whispering to young wolves the dangers of the chase! You will know, perchance, ere this day is out, what yonder men are, whom you hold in rash contempt."

"Why, what are they?" said Henry Seyton, who now joined them: "have they sinews of wire, and flesh of iron?—Will lead pierce and steel cut them!—If so, reverend father, we have little to fear."

"They are evil men," said the Abbot, "but this trade of war demands no saints.—Murray and Morton are known to be the best generals in Scotland. No one ever saw Lindesay's or Ruthven's back.—Kirkcaldy of Grange was named by the Constable Montmorency the first soldier in Europe.—My brother, too good a name for such a cause, has been far and wide known for a soldier."

"The better, the better!" said Seyton, triumphantly; "we shall have all these traitors of rank and name in a fair field before us. Our cause is the best, our numbers are the strongest, our hearts and limbs match theirs—Saint Bennet, and set on!"

The Abbot made no reply, but seemed lost in reflection; and his anxiety in some measure communicated itself to Roland Avenel, who ever, as their line of march led over a ridge or a prominence, cast an anxious look towards the towers of Glasgow, as if he expected to see symptoms of the enemy issuing forth. It was not that he feared the fight, but the issue was of such deep import to his country, and to himself, that the natural fire of his spirit burned with a less lively, though with a more intense glow. Love, honour, fame, fortune, all seemed to depend on the issue of one field, rashly hazarded perhaps, but now likely to become unavoidable and decisive.

When, at length, their march came to be nearly parallel with the city of Glasgow, Roland became sensible that the high grounds before them were already in part occupied by a force, shewing, like their own, the royal banner of Scotland, and on the point of being supported by columns of infantry and squadrons of horse, which the city gates had poured forth, and which hastily advanced to sustain those troops who already possessed the ground in front of the Queen's forces. Horseman after horseman galloped in from the advanced guard, with tidings that Murray had taken the field with his whole army; that his object was to intercept the Queen's march, and his purpose unquestionable to hazard a battle. It was now that the tempers of men were subjected to a sudden and a severe trial; and that those who had too presumptuously concluded that they would pass without combat, were something disconcerted, when, at once, and with little time to deliberate, they found themselves placed in front of a resolute enemy.—Their chiefs immediately assembled around the Queen, and held a hasty council of war. Mary's quivering lip confessed the fear which she endeavoured to conceal under a bold and dignified demeanour. But her efforts were overcome by painful recollections of the disastrous issue of her last appearance in arms at Corberry-hill; and when she went to have asked their advice for ordering the battle, she involuntarily inquired whether there were no means of avoiding without an engagement!

"Doubting!" answered the Lord Seyton; "when we are at one to ten of your Highness's enemies,

I may think of escape—but never while I stand with three to two!"

"Battle! battle!" exclaimed the assembled lords; "we will drive the rebels from their vantage ground, as the hound turns the hare on the hill side."

"Methinks, my noble lords," said the Abbot, "it were as well to prevent his gaining that advantage.—Our road lies through yonder hamlet on the brow, and whichever party hath the luck to possess it, with its little gardens and enclosures, will attain a post of great defence."

"The reverend father is right," said the Queen. "Oh, haste thee, Seyton, haste, and get thither before them—they are marching like the wind."

Seyton bowed low, and turned his horse's head.—"Your Highness honours me," he said; "I will instantly press forward, and seize the post."

"Not before me, my lord, whose charge is the command of the vanguard," said the Lord of Arbroath.

"Before you, or any Hamilton in Scotland," said the Seyton, "having the Queen's command—Follow me, gentlemen, my vassals and kinsmen—Saint Bennet, and set on!"

"And follow me," said Arbroath, "my noble kinsmen; and brave men-tenafis, we will see which will first reach the post of danger. For God and Queen Mary!"

"Ill-omened haste, and most unhappy strife," said the Abbot, who saw them and their followers rush hastily and emulously to ascend the height, without waiting till their men were placed in order.—"And you, gentlemen," he continued, addressing Roland and Seyton, who were each about to follow those who hastened thus disorderly to the conflict, "will you leave the Queen's person unguarded?"

"Oh, leave me not, gentlemen!" said the Queen.—"Roland and Seyton, do not leave me—there are enough of arms to strike in this fell combat—withdraw not those to whom I trust for my safety."

"We may not leave her Grace," said Roland, looking at Seyton and turning his horse.

"I ever looked when thou wouldst find out that," rejoined the fiery youth.

Roland made no answer, but bit his lip till the blood came, and spurring his horse up to the side of Catherine Seyton's palfrey, he whispered in a low voice, "I never thought to have done aught to deserve you; but this day I have heard myself upbraided with cowardice, and my sword remained still sheathed, and all for the sake of you."

"There is madness among us all," said the damsel; "my father, my brother, and you, are all alike bereft of reason. Ye should think only of this poor Queen, and you are all inspired by your own absurd jealousies.—The Monk is the only soldier and man of sense amongst you all.—My Lord Abbot," she cried aloud, "was it not better we should draw to the westward, and wait the event that God shall send us, instead of remaining here in the highway, endangering the Queen's person, andumbering the troops in their advance?"

"You my well, my daughter," replied the Abbot; "had we but seen to guide us where the Queen's person may be in safety.—Our nobles hurry to the conflict, without giving a thought of the very cause of the war."

"Follow me," said a knight, coming at once, well mounted, and armed completely in black armour, but having the star of his household on his surcoat,

ing no crest on his helmet, or device upon his shield.

"We will follow no stranger," said the Abbot, "without some warrant of his truth."

"I am a stranger and in your hands," said the horseman; "if you wish to know more of me, the Queen herself will be your warrant."

The Queen had remained fixed to the spot, as if disabled by fear, yet mechanically smiling, bowing, and waving her hand, as banners were lowered and spears depressed before her, while, emulating the strife betwixt Seyton and Arbroath, hand on hand pressed forward their march towards the enemy. Scarce, however, had the black rider whispered something in her ear, than she assented to what he said; and when he spoke aloud, and with an air of command, "Gentlemen, it is the Queen's pleasure that you should follow me," Mary uttered, with something like eagerness, the words "Yea."

All were in motion in an instant; for the black horseman, throwing off a sort of apathy of manner, which his first appearance indicated, spurred his horse to and fro, making him take such active bounds and short turns, as shewed the rider master of the animal; and getting the Queen's little pettinie in some order for marching, he led them to the left, directing his course towards a castle; which, crowning a gentle yet commanding eminence, presented an extensive view over the country beneath, and in particular, commanded a view of those heights which both armies hastened to occupy, and which it was now apparent must almost instantly be the scene of struggle and dispute.

"Yonder towers," said the Abbot, questioning the sable horseman, "to whom do they belong?—and are they now in the hands of friends?"

"They are untenanted," replied the stranger, "or, at least, they have no hostile inmates. — But urge these youths, Sir Abbot, to make more haste — this is but an evil time to satisfy their idle curiosity, by peering out upon the battle in which they are to take no share."

"The worse luck mine," said Henry Seyton, who overheard him; "I would rather be under my father's banner at this moment than be made Chamberlain of Holyrood, for this my present duty of peaceful ward well and patiently discharged."

"Your place under your father's banner will shortly be right dangerous," said Roland Avenel, who, pressing his horse towards the westward, had still his look reverted to the armies; "for I see yonder body of cavalry, which presses from the eastward, will reach the village ere Lord Seyton can gain it."

"They are but cavalry," said Seyton, looking attentively; "they cannot hold the village without shot of hargreaves."

"Look more closely," said Roland; "you will see that each of these horsemen who advances so rapidly from Glasgow, carries a footman behind him."

"Now, by Heaven, he speaks well!" said the black cavalier; "one of you two must go carry the news to Lord Seyton and Lord Arbroath, that they hasten not their horsemen on before the foot, but advance more regularly."

"Be that my errand," said Roland, "for I first marked the straggling of the enemy."

"But, by your leave," said Seyton, "yonder is my father's banner engaged, and it best becomes me to go to the rescue."

"I will stand by the Queen's decision," said Roland Avenel.

"What new appeal?—what new quarrel?" said Queen Mary—"Are there not in yonder dark host enemies enough to Mary Stewart, but must her very friends turn enemies to each other?"

"Nay, madam," said Roland, "the young Master of Seyton and I did but dispute who should leave your person to do a most needful message to the host. He thought his rank entitled him, and I deemed that the person of least consequence, being myself, were better perilled —"

"Not so," said the Queen; "if one must leave me, be it Seyton."

Henry Seyton bowed till the white plumes on his helmet mixed with the flowing mane of his gallant war-horse, then placed himself firm in the saddle, shook his lance aloft with an air of triumph and determination, and striking his horse with the spurs, made towards his father's banner, which was still advancing up the hill, and dashed his steed over every obstacle that occurred in his headlong path.

"My brother! my father!" exclaimed Catherine, with an expression of agonized apprehension—"they are in the midst of peril, and I in safety!"

"Would to God," said Roland, "that I were with them, and could ransom every drop of their blood by two of mine!"

"Do I not know thou dost wish it?" said Catherine—"Can a woman say to a man what I have well-nigh said to thee, and yet think that he could harbour fear or faintness of heart?—There is that in yon distant sound of approaching battle that pleases me even while it affrights me. I would I were a man, that I might feel that stern delight, without the mixture of terror!"

"Ride up, ride up, Lady Catherine Seyton," cried the Abbot, as they still swept on at a rapid pace, and were now close beneath the walls of the castle—"ride up, and aid Lady Fleming to support the Queen—she gives way more and more."

They halted and lifted Mary from the saddle, and were about to support her towards the castle, when she said faintly, "Not there—not there—these walls will I never enter more!"

"Be a Queen, madam," said the Abbot, "and forget that you are a woman."

"Oh, I must forget much, much more," answered the unfortunate Mary, in an under tone, "ere I can look with steady eyes on these well-known scenes!—I must forget the days which I spent here as the bride of the lost—the murdered —"

"This is the Castle of Crookstone," said the Lady Fleming, "in which the Queen held her first court after she was married to Darnley."

"Heaven," said the Abbot, "thy hand is upon us!—Bear yet up, madam—your foes are the foes of Holy Church, and God will this day decide whether Scotland shall be Catholic or heretic."

A heavy and continued fire of cannon and musketry, bore a tremendous burden to his words, and seemed far more than they to recall the spirits of the Queen.

"To yonder tree," she said, pointing to a young tree which grew on a small mount close to the castle; "I know it well—from thence you may see a prospect wide as from the peak of Schiehallion."

And freeing herself from her assistants, she walked with a determined, yet somewhat wild step,

up to the stem of the noble yew. The Abbot, Catherine, and Roland Avenel followed her, while Lady Fleming kept back the inferior persons of her train. The black horseman also followed the Queen, waiting on her as closely as the shadow upon the light, but ever remaining at the distance of two or three yards—he folded his arms on his bosom, turned his back to the battle, and seemed solely occupied by gazing on Mary, through the bars of his closed visor. The Queen regarded him not, but fixed her eyes upon the spreading yew.

"Ay, fair and stately tree," she said, as if at the sight of it she had been rapt away from the present scene, and had overcome the horror which had oppressed her at the first approach to Crookstone, "there thou standest, gay and goodly as ever, though thou hearest the sounds of war, instead of the vows of love. All is gone since I last greeted thee—love and lover—vows and vower—king and kingdom.—How goes thy field, my Lord Abbot!—with us, I trust—yet what but evil can Mary's eyes witness from this spot?"

Her attendants eagerly bent their eyes on the field of battle, but could discover nothing more than that it was obstinately contested. The small enclosures and cottage gardens in the village, of which they had a full and commanding view, and which shortly before lay, with their lines of sycamores and ash-trees, so still and quiet in the mild light of a May sun, were now each converted into a line of fire, canopied by smoke; and the sustained and constant report of the musketry and cannon, mingled with the shouts of meeting combatants, shewed that as yet neither party had given ground.

"Many a soul finds its final departure to heaven or hell, in these awful thunders," said the Abbot; "let those that believe in the Holy Church, join me in orisons for victory in this dreadful combat."

"Not here—not here," said the unfortunate Queen; "pray not here, father, or pray in silence—my mind is too much torn between the past and the present, to dare to approach the heavenly throne—Or, if we will pray, be it for one whose fondest affections have been her greatest crimes, and who has ceased to be a queen, only because she was a deceived and a tender-hearted woman."

"Were it not well," said Roland, "that I rode somewhat nearer the hosts, and saw the fate of the day?"

"Do so, in the name of God," said the Abbot; "for if our friends are scattered, our flight must be hasty—but beware thou approach not too nigh the conflict; there is more than thine own life depends on thy safe return."

"Oh, go not too nigh," said Catherine; "but fail not to see how the Seytons fight, and how they bear themselves."

"Fear nothing, I will be on my guard," said Roland Avenel; and without waiting farther answer, rode towards the scene of conflict, keeping, as he rode, the higher and unenclosed ground, and ever looking cautiously around him, for fear of involving himself in some hostile party. As he approached, the shots rung sharp and more sharply on his ear, the shouts came wilder and wilder, and he felt that thick beating of the heart, that mixture of national apprehension, intense curiosity, and anxiety for the dubious event, which even the hardest experience when they approach alone to a scene of interest and of danger.

At length he drew so close, that from a bank, screened by bushes and underwood, he could distinctly see where the struggle was most keenly maintained. This was in a hollow way, leading to the village, up which the Queen's vanguard had marched, with more hasty courage than well-advised conduct, for the purpose of possessing themselves of that post of advantage. They found their scheme anticipated, and the hedges and enclosures already occupied by the enemy, led by the celebrated Kirkcaldy of Grange and the Earl of Morton; and not small was the loss which they sustained while struggling forward to cope to close with the men-at-arms on the other side. But, as the Queen's followers were chiefly noblemen and barons, with their kinsmen and followers, they had pressed onward, contemning obstacles and danger, and had, when Roland arrived on the ground, met hand to hand at the gorge of the pass with the Regent's vanguard, and endeavoured to bear them out of the village at the spear-point; while their foes, equally determined to keep the advantage which they had attained, struggled with the like obstinacy to drive back the assailants.

Both parties were on foot, and armed in proof; so that, when the long lances of the front ranks were fixed in each other's shields, corselets, and breastplates, the struggle resembled that of two bulls, who, fixing their frontlets hard against each other, remain in that posture for hours, until the superior strength or obstinacy of the one compels the other to take to flight, or bears him down to the earth. Thus locked together in the deadly struggle, which swayed slowly to and fro, as one or other party gained the advantage, those who fell were trampled on alike by friends and foes; those whose weapons were broken, retired from the front rank, and had their place supplied by others; while the rearward ranks, unable otherwise to share in the combat, fired their pistols, and hurled their daggers, and the points and truncheons of the broken weapons, like javelins against the enemy.

"God and the Queen!" resounded from the one party; "God and the King!" thundered from the other; while, in the name of their sovereign, fellow-subjects on both sides shed each other's blood, and, in the name of their Creator, defaced his image. Amid the tumult was often heard the voices of the captains, shouting their commands; of leaders and chiefs, crying their gathering words; of groans and shrieks from the falling and the dying.

The strife had lasted nearly an hour. The strength of both parties seemed exhausted; but their rage was unabated, and their obstinacy unshaken, when Roland, who turned eye and ear to all around him, saw a column of infantry, headed by a few horsemen, wheel round the base of the bank where he had stationed himself, and, levelling their long lances, attack the flank of the Queen's vanguard, closely engaged as they were in conflict on their front. The very first glance shewed him that the leader who directed this movement was the Knight of Avenel, his ancient master; and the next convinced him, that its effects would be decisive. The result of the attack of fresh and unbroken forces upon the flank of those already wearied with a long and obstinate struggle, was indeed, instantaneous.

The column of the assailants, which had hitherto shown one dark, dense, and solid line of battalions,

unmounted with plumage, was at once broken and hurled in confusion down the hill, which they had so long endeavoured to gain. In vain were the leaders heard calling upon their followers to stand to the combat, and seen personally resisting when all resistance was evidently vain. They were slain, or felled to the earth, or hurled backwards by the mingled tide of flight and pursuit. What were Roland's feelings on beholding the rout, and feeling that all that remained for him was to turn bridle, and endeavour to ensure the safety of the Queen's person? Yet, keen as his grief and shame might be, they were both forgotten, when, almost close beneath the bank which he occupied, he saw Henry Seyton forced away from his own party in the tumult, covered with dust and blood, and defending himself desperately against several of the enemy who had gathered around him, attracted by his gay armour. Roland paused not a moment, but pushing his steed down the bank, leaped him amongst the hostile party, dealt three or four blows amongst them, which struck down two, and made the rest stand aloof; then reaching Seyton his hand, he exhorted him to seize fast on his horse's mane.

"We live or die together this day," said he; "keep but fast hold till we are out of the press, and then my horse is yours."

Seyton heard and exerted his remaining strength, and, by their joint efforts, Roland brought him out of danger, and behind the spot from whence he had witnessed the disastrous conclusion of the fight. But no sooner were they under shelter of the trees, than Seyton let go his hold, and, in spite of Roland's efforts to support him, fell at length on the turf. "Trouble yourself no more with me," he said; "this is my first and my last battle—and I have already seen too much of it to wish to see the close. Hasten to save the Queen—and commend me to Catherine—she will never more be mistaken for me, nor I for her—the last sword-stroke has made an eternal distinction."

"Let me aid you to mount my horse," said Roland, eagerly, "and you may yet be saved—I can find my own way on foot—turn but my horse's head westward, and he will carry you fleet and easy as the wind."

"I will never mount steed more," said the youth; "farewell—I love thee better dying, than ever I thought to have done while in life—I would that old man's blood were not on my hand!—*Sanctus Benedictus, ora pro eis*—Stand not to look on a dying man, but haste to save the Queen!"

These words were spoken with the last effort of his voice, and scarce were they uttered ere the speaker was no more. They recalled Roland to the sense of the duty which he had well-nigh forgotten, but they did not reach his ears only.

"The Queen—where is the Queen?" said Halbert Glendinning, who, followed by two or three horsemen, appeared at this instant. Roland made no answer, but turning his horse, and confiding in his speed, gave him at once rein and spur, and rode over height and hollow towards the Castle of Crookston. More heavily armed, and mounted upon a horse of less speed, Sir Halbert Glendinning followed with coupled lances, calling out as he rode, "Sir, with the belly-brace, back, and show your right to bear that badge—Sir, not thus cowardly, nor dishonour the cognizance thus decreed not to wear!—Halt, sir, or, by Heaven, I will

strike thee with my lance on the back, and cleave thee like a dastard—I am the Knight of Avenel—I am Halbert Glendinning."

But Roland, who had no purpose of encountering his old master, and who, besides, knew the Queen's safety depended on his making the best speed he could, answered not a word to the defiance and reproaches which Sir Halbert continued to throw out against him; but making the best use of his spurs, rode yet harder than before, and had gained about a hundred yards upon his pursuer, when coming near to the yew-tree where he had left the Queen, he saw them already getting to horse, and cried out as loud as he could, "Foes! foes!—Ride for it, fair ladies—Brave gentlemen, do your devoir to protect them!"

So saying, he wheeled his horse, and avoiding the shock of Sir Halbert Glendinning, charged one of that knight's followers, who was nearly on a line with him, so rudely with his lance, that the overthrown horse and man. He then drew his sword and attacked the second, while the black man-at-arms, throwing himself in the way of Glendinning, they rushed on each other so fiercely, that both horses were overthrown, and the riders lay rolling on the plain. Neither was able to arise, for the black horseman was pierced through with Glendinning's lance, and the Knight of Avenel, oppressed with the weight of his own horse, and sorely bruised besides, seemed in little better plight than he whom he had mortally wounded.

"Yield thee, Sir Knight of Avenel, rescue or no rescue," said Roland, who had put a second antagonist out of condition to combat, and hastened to prevent Glendinning from renewing the conflict.

"I may not choose but yield," said Sir Halbert, "since I can no longer fight; but it shames me to speak such a word to a coward like thee!"

"Call me not coward," said Roland, lifting his visor, and helping his prisoner to rise, "since but for old kindness at thy hand, and yet more at thy lady's, I had met thee as a brave man should."

"The favourite page of my wife!" said Sir Halbert, astonished; "Ah! wretched boy, I have heard of thy treason at Lochleven."

"Reproach him not, my brother," said the Abbot, "he was, but an agent in the hands of Heaven."

"To horse, to horse!" said Catherine Seyton; "mount and begone, or we are all lost. I see our gallant army flying for many a league—To horse, my Lord Abbot—To horse, Roland—My gracious Liege, to horse! Ere this, we should have ridden a mile."

"Look on these features," said Mary, pointing to the flying knight, who had been unhelmed by some compassionate hand; "look there, and tell me if she who ruins all who love her, ought to fly a foot farther to save her wretched life!"

The reader must have long anticipated the discovery which the Queen's feelings had made before her eyes confirmed it. It was the features of the unhappy George Douglas, on which death was stamping his mark.

"Look—look at him well," said the Queen; "thus has it been with all who loved Mary Stewart!—The royalty of France, the wit of Cleopatra, the power and gallantry of the gay Gordon, the melody of Rinaldo, the pretty form and youthful grace of Darnley, the bold address and courtly manners of

Bothwell—and now the deep-devoted passion of the noble Douglas—nought could save them—they looked on the wretched Mary, and to have loved her was crime enough to deserve early death! No sooner had the victim formed a kind thought of me, than the poisoned cup, the axe and block, the dagger, the mine, were ready to punish them for casting away affection on such a wretch as I am!—Importune me not—I will fly no farther—I can die but once, and I will die here.”

While she spoke, her tears fell fast on the face of the dying man, who continued to fix his eyes on her with an eagerness of passion, which death itself could hardly subdue.—“Mourn not for me,” he said faintly, “but care for your own safety—I die in mine armour as a Douglas should, and, I die pitied by Mary Stewart!”

He expired with these words, and without withdrawing his eyes from her face; and the Queen, whose heart was of that soft and gentle mould, which in domestic life, and with a more suitable partner than Darnley, might have made her happy, remained weeping by the dead man, until recalled to herself by the Abbot, who found it necessary to use a style of unusual remonstrance. “We also, madam,” he said, “we, your Grace’s devoted followers, have friends and relatives to weep for. I leave a brother in imminent jeopardy—the husband of the Lady Fleming—the father and brothers of the Lady Catherine, are all in yonder bloody field, slain, it is to be feared, or prisoners. We forget the fate of our own nearest and dearest, to wait on our Queen, and she is too much occupied with her own sorrows to give one thought to ours.”

“I deserve not your reproach, father,” said the Queen, checking her tears; “but I am docile to it—where must we go—what must we do?”

“We must fly, and that instantly,” said the Abbot; “whither is not so easily answered, but we may dispute it upon the road—Lift her to her saddle, and set forward.”

They set off accordingly—Roland lingered a moment, to command the attendants of the Knight of Avenel to convey their master to the Castle of Crookstone, and to say that he demanded from him no other condition of liberty, than his word, that he and his followers would keep secret the direction in which the Queen fled. As he turned his rein to depart, the honest countenance of Adam Woodcock stared upon him with an expression of surprise, which, at another time, would have excited his hearty mirth. He had been one of the followers who had experienced the weight of Roland’s arm, and they now knew each other, Roland having put up his visor, and the good yeoman having thrown away his barret-cap, with the iron bars in front, that he might the more readily assist his master. Into this barret-cap, as it lay on the ground, Roland forgot not to drop a few gold pieces, (fruits of the Queen’s liberality,) and with a signal of kind recollection and enduring friendship, he departed at full gallop to overtake the Queen, the dust raised by her train being already far down the hill.

“It is not fairy-money,” said honest Adam, weighing and handling the gold.—“And it was Master Roland himself, that is a certain thing—

the same open hand, and, by our Lady!”—(shrugging his shoulders).—“the same ready fist—My Lady will hear of this gladly, for she mourns for him as if he were her son. And to see how gay he is! But these light lads are as sure to be uppestom as the froth to be on the top of the quart-pot—Your man of solid parts remains ever a falconer.” So saying, he went to aid his comrades, who had now come up in greater numbers, to carry his master into the Castle of Crookstone.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

My native land, good-night!
BYRON.

MANY a bitter tear was shed, during the hasty flight of Queen Mary, over fallen hopes, future prospects, and slaughtered friends. The deaths of the brave Douglas, and of the fiery but gallant young Seyton, seemed to affect the Queen as much as the fall from the throne, on which she had so nearly been again seated. Catherine Seyton devoured in secret her own grief, anxious to support the broken spirits of her mistress; and the Abbot, bending his troubled thoughts upon futurity, endeavoured in vain to form some plan which had a shadow of hope. The spirit of young Roland—for he also mingled in the hasty debates held by the companions of the Queen’s flight—continued unchecked and unbroken.

“Your Majesty,” he said, “has lost a battle—Your ancestor, Bruce, lost seven successively, ere he sat triumphant on the Scottish throne, and proclaimed with the voice of a victor, in the field of Bannockburn, the independence of his country. Are not these heaths, which we may traverse at will, better than the locked, guarded, and beleaguered Castle of Lochleven!—We are free—in that one word there is comfort for all our losses.”

He struck a bold note, but the heart of Mary made no response.

“Better,” she said, “I had still been in Lochleven, than seen the slaughter made by rebels among the subjects who offered themselves to death for my sake. Speak not to me of farther efforts—they would only cost the lives of you, the friends who recommend them! I would not again undergo what I felt, when I saw from yonder mount the swords of the fell horsemen of Morton raging among the faithful Seytons and Hamiltons, for their loyalty to their Queen—I would not again feel what I felt when Douglas’s life-blood stained my mantle for his love to Mary Stewart—not to be empress of all that Britain’s seas enclose. Find for me some place where I can hide my unhappy head, which brings destruction on all who love it—it is the last favour that Mary asks of her faithful followers.”

In this dejected mood, but still pursuing her flight with unabated rapidity, the unfortunate Mary, after having been joined by Lord Harries and a few followers, at length halted, for the first time, at the Abbey of Dunfermline, nearly sixty miles distant from the field of battle. In this famous quarter of Galloway, the Duke of Albany, not having yet been strictly ordered against the queen, a few still lingered in their sole attachment, and the Duke

1 See Note B. *Ballads of Langlands.*

with tears and reverence, received the fugitive Queen at the gate of his convent.

"I bring you ruin, my good Father," said the Queen, as she was lifted from her palfrey.

"It is welcome," said the Prior, "if it comes in the train of duty."

Placed on the ground, and supported by her ladies, the Queen looked for an instant at her palfrey, which, jaded and drooping its head, seemed as if it mourned the distresses of its mistress.

"Good Roland," said the Queen, whispering, "let Rosabelle be cared for—ask thy heart, and it will tell thee why I make this trifling request even in this awful hour."

She was conducted to her apartment, and in the hurried consultation of her attendants, the fatal resolution of the retreat to England was finally adopted. In the morning it received her approbation, and a messenger was despatched to the English warden, to pray him for safe-conduct and hospitality, on the part of the Queen of Scotland. On the next day, the Abbot Ambrose walked in the garden of the Abbey with Roland, to whom he expressed his disapprobation of the course pursued. "It is madness and ruin," he said; "better commit herself to the savage Highlanders or wild Bordermen, than to the faith of Elizabeth. A woman to a rival woman—a presumptive successor to the keeping of a jealous and childless Queen!—Roland, Harries is true and loyal, but his counsel has ruined his mistress."

"Ay, ruin follows us every where," said an old man, with a spade in his hand, and dressed like a lay-brother, of whose presence, in the vehemence of his exclamation, the Abbot had not been aware—"Gaze not on me with such wonder!—I am he who was the Abbot Boniface at Kennaquhair, who was the gardener Blinkhoolie at Lochleven, hunted round to the place in which I served my noviciate, and now ye are come to rouse me up again!—A weary life I have had for one to whom peace was ever the dearest blessing!"

"We will soon rid you of our company, good father," said the Abbot; "and the Queen will, I fear, trouble your retreat no more."

"Nay, you said as much before," said the querulous old man, "and yet I was put forth from Kinross, and pillaged by troopers on the road.—They took from me the certificate that you wot of—that of the Baron—ay, he was a moss-trooper like themselves—You asked me of it, and I could never find it, but they found it—it showed the marriage of—of—my memory fails me—Now see how men differ! Father Nicholas would have told you an hundred tales of these Abbot Ingelram, on whose soul God have mercy!—He was, I warrant you, fourscore and six, and I am not more than—let me see—"

"Was not Avenell the name you seek, my good father?" said Roland, impatiently, yet moderating his tone for fear of alarming or offending the infirm old man.

"Ay, right—Avenell, Julian Avenell—You are perfect in the name—I kept all the special confessions, judging it held with my vow to do so—I could not and it when my successor, Ambrosius, spoke on it—but the troopers found it, and the Knight who commanded the party struck his breast, till the target clattered like an empty watering-can."

"Saint Mary!" said the Abbot, "in whom could such a paper excite such interest! What was the appearance of the Knight, his arms, his colours!"

"Ye distract me with your questions—I dared hardly look at him—they charged me with bearing letters for the Queen, and searched my mail—This was all along of your doings at Lochleven."

"I trust in God," said the Abbot to Roland, who stood beside him, shivering and trembling with impatience, "the paper has fallen into the hands of my brother—I heard he had been with his followers on the scout betwixt Stirling and Glasgow.—Bore not the Knight a holly-bough on his helmet!—Canst thou not remember?"

"Oh, remember—remember," said the old man pettishly; "Count as many years as I do, if your plots will let you, and see what, and how much, you remember.—Why, I scarce remember the pear-mains which I grafted here with my own hands some fifty years since."

At this moment a bugle sounded loudly from the beach.

"It is the death-blast to Queen Mary's royalty," said Ambrosius; "the English warden's answer has been received, favourable doubtless, for when was the door of the trap closed against the prey which it was set for!—Droop not, Roland—this matter shall be sifted to the bottom—but we must not now leave the Queen—follow me—let us do our duty, and trust the issue with God—Farewell, good Father—I will visit thee again soon."

He was about to leave the garden, followed by Roland, with half-reluctant steps. The Ex-Abbot resumed his spade.

"I could be sorry for these men," he said, "ay, and for that poor Queen, but what avail earthly sorrows to a man of fourscore!—and it is a rare dropping morning for the early colewort."

"He is stricken with age," said Ambrosius, as he dragged Roland down to the sea-beach; "we must let him take his time to collect himself—nothing now can be thought on but the fate of the Queen."

They soon arrived where she stood, surrounded by her little train, and by her side the sheriff of Cumberland, a gentleman of the house of Lowther, richly dressed and accompanied by soldiers. The aspect of the Queen exhibited a singular mixture of alacrity and reluctance to depart. Her language and gestures spoke hope and consolation to her attendants, and she seemed desirous to persuade even herself that the step she adopted was secure, and that the assurance she had received of kind reception was altogether satisfactory; but her quivering lip, and unsettled eye, betrayed at once her anguish at departing from Scotland, and her fears of confiding herself to the doubtful faith of England.

"Welcome, my Lord Abbot," she said, speaking to Ambrosius, "and you, Roland Avenell, we have joyful news for you—our loving sister's officer proffers us, in her name, a safe asylum from the rebels who have driven us from our own—only it grieves me we must here part from you for a short space."

"Part from us, madam!" said the Abbot. "Is your welcome in England, then, to commence with the abridgment of your train, and dismissal of your counsellors?"

"Take it not thus, good Father," said Mary:

"the Warden and the Sheriff, faithful servants of our Royal Sister, deem it necessary to obey her instructions in the present case, even to the latter, and can only take upon them to admit me with my female attendants. An express will instantly be despatched from London, assigning me a place of residence; and I will speedily send to all of you whenever my Court shall be formed."

"Your Court formed in England! and while Elizabeth lives and reigns!" said the Abbot—"that will be when we shall see two sons in one heaven!"

"Do not think so," replied the Queen; "we are well assured of our sister's good faith. Elizabeth loves fame—and not all that she has won by her power and her wisdom will equal that which she will acquire by extending her hospitality to a distressed sister!—not all that she may hereafter do of good, wise, and great, would blot out the reproach of abusing our confidence.—Farewell, my page—now my knight—farewell for a brief season. I will dry the tears of Catherine, or I will weep with her till neither of us can weep longer." She held out her hand to Roland, who, flinging himself on his knees, kissed it with much emotion. He was about to render the same homage to Catherine, when the Queen, assuming an air of sprightliness, said, "Her lips, thou foolish boy! and, Catherine, say it not—these English gentlemen should see, that, even in our cold climate, Beauty knows how to reward Bravery and Fidelity!"

"We are not now to learn the force of Scottish beauty, or the gentle of Scottish valour," said the Sheriff of Cumberland, courteously—"I would it were in my power to bid these attendants upon her who is herself the mistress of Scottish beauty; as welcome to England as my poor cares would make them. But our Queen's orders are positive in case of such an emergency, and they must not be disputed by her subject.—May I remind your Majesty that the tide ebbs fast?"

The Sheriff took the Queen's hand, and she had already placed her foot on the gangway, by which she was to enter the skiff, when the Abbot, starting from a trance of grief and astonishment at the words of the Sheriff, rushed into the water, and seized upon her mantle.

"She foresaw it!—She foresaw it!"—he exclaimed—"she foresaw your flight into her realm; and, foreseeing it, gave orders you should be thus received. Blinded, deceived, doomed Princess! your fate is sealed when you quit this strand!—Queen of Scotland, thou shalt not leave thine heritage!" he continued, holding a still firmer grasp upon her mantle; "true men shall turn rebels to thy will, that they may save thee from captivity or death. Fear not the bills and bows whom that gay man has at his beck—we will withstand him by force. Oh, for the arm of my warlike brother!—Roland Avenel, draw thy sword."

The Queen stood breathless and frightened; one foot upon the plank, the other on the sand of her native shore, which she was quitting forever.

"What needs this violence, Sir Priest!" said the Sheriff of Cumberland; "I came hither at your Queen's command, to do her service; and I will depart at her least order, if she rejects such aid as I can offer. No marvel is it if our Queen's wisdom foresaw that such chance as this might happen

amidst the turmoils of your unsettled State; and, while willing to afford fair hospitality to her Royal Sister, deemed it wise to prohibit the entrance of a broken army of her followers into the English frontier."

"You hear," said Queen Mary, gently unloosing her robe from the Abbot's grasp, "that we exercise full liberty of choice in leaving this shore and, unquestionless, the choice will remain free to us in going to France, or returning to our own dominions, as we shall determine.—Besides, it is too late—Your blessing, Father, and God speed thee!"

"May He have mercy on thee, Princess, and speed thee also!" said the Abbot, retreating. "But my soul tells me I look on thee for the last time!"

The sails were hoisted, the oars were plied, the vessel went freshly on her way through the firth which divides the shores of Cumberland from those of Galloway; but not till the vessel diminished to the size of a child's frigate, did the doubtful, and dejected, and dismissed followers of the Queen cease to linger on the sands; and, long, long could they discern the kerchief of Mary, as she waved the oft-repeated signal of adieu to her faithful adherents and to the shores of Scotland.

If good tidings of a private nature could have comforted Roland for parting with his mistress, and for the distresses of his sovereign, he received such comfort some days subsequent to the Queen's leaving Dundernann. A breathless post—no other than Adam Woodcock—brought despatches from Sir Halbert Glendinning to the Abbot, whom he found with Roland, still residing at Dundernann, and in vain torrying Boniface with fresh interrogations. The packet bore an earnest invitation to his brother to make Avenel Castle for a time his residence. "The clemency of the Regent," said the writer, "has extended pardon both to Roland and to you, upon condition of your remaining a time under my wardship. And I have that to communicate respecting the parentage of Roland, which not only you will willingly listen to, but which will be also found to afford me, as the husband of his nearest relative, some interest in the future course of his life."

The Abbot read this letter, and paused, as if considering what were best for him to do. Meanwhile, Woodcock took Roland aside, and addressed him as follows:—"Now, look, Mr Roland, that you do not let any papistrie nonsense lure either the priest or you from the right quarry. See you, you ever bore yourself as a bit of a gentleman. Read that, and thank God that threw old Abbot Boniface in our way, as two of the Seyd's men were conveying him towards Dundernann house.—We searched him for intelligence concerning that fair exploit of yours at Icklerien, that has cost many a man his life, and me a set of sore-popes—and we found what is better for your purpose than ours."

The paper which he gave, was, indeed, an attestation by Father Philip, subscribing himself unworthy Sacristan, and brother of the House of Saint Mary's, stating, "that under a vow of secrecy he had united, in the holy sacrament of marriage, Julian Avenel and Catherine Grange; but that Julian having repented of his union, he, Father Philip, had been

insfully prevailed on by him to conceal and disguise the same, according to a complot devised betwixt him and the said Julian Avenel, whereby the poor damsel was induced to believe that the ceremony had been performed by one not in holy orders, and having no authority to that effect. Which sinful concealment the undersigned conceived to be the cause why he was abandoned to the misguiding of a water-flood, whereby he had been under a spell, which obliged him to answer every question, even touching the most solemn matters, with idle snatches of old songs, besides being sorely afflicted with rheumatic pains ever after. Wherefore he had deposited this testament and confession, with the day and date of the said marriage, with his lawful superior Boniface, Abbot of Saint Mary's, *sub sigillo confessionis*."

It appeared by a letter from Julian, folded carefully up with the certificate, that the Abbot Boniface had, in effect, bestirred himself in the affair, and obtained from the Baron a promise to avow his marriage; but the death of both Julian and his injured bride, together with the Abbot's resignation, his ignorance of the fate of their unhappy offspring, and, above all, the good father's listless and inactive disposition, had suffered the matter to become totally forgotten, until it was recalled by some accidental conversation with the Abbot Ambrosius concerning the fortunes of the Avenel family. At the request of his successor, the quondam Abbot made search for it; but, as he would receive no assistance in looking among the few records of spiritual experiences and important confessions, which he had conscientiously treasured, it might have remained for ever hidden amongst them, but for the more active researches of Sir Halbert Glendinning.

"So that you are like to be heir of Avenel at last, Master Roland, after my lord and lady have gone to their place," said Adam; "and 'ga I have but one boon to ask, I trust you will not nick me with nay."

"Not if it be in my power to say yes, my trusty friend."

"Why then, I must needs, if I live to see that day, keep on feeding the cyases with unwashed flesh," said Woodcock sturdily, yet as if doubting the reception that his request might meet with.

"Thou shalt feed them with what you list for me," said Roland, laughing; "I am not many months older than when I left the Castle, but I trust I have gathered wit enough to cross no man of skill in his own vocation."

"Then I would not change places with the King's falconer," said Adam Woodcock, "nor with the Queen's neither — but they say she will be mewed up and never need one. — I see it grieves you to think of it, and I could grieve for company; but what help for it? — Fortune will fly her own flight, let a man holla himself hoarse."

The Abbot and Roland journeyed to Avenel, where the former was tenderly received by his brother, while the lady wept for joy to find that in her favourite orphan she had protected the sole surviving branch of her own family. Sir Halbert

Glendinning and his household were not a little surprised at the change which a brief acquaintance with the world had produced in their former inmate, and rejoiced to find, in the pottish, spoiled, and presuming page, a modest and unassuming young man, too much acquainted with his own expectations and character, to be hot or petulant in demanding the consideration which was readily and voluntarily yielded to him. The old Major Domo Wingate was the first to sing his praises, to which Mistress Lillias bore a loud echo, always hoping that God would teach him the true gospel.

To the true gospel the heart of Roland had secretly long inclined, and the departure of the good Abbot for France, with the purpose of entering into some house of his order in that kingdom, removed his chief objection to renouncing the Catholic faith. Another might have existed in the duty which he owed to Magdalen Gramme, both by birth and from gratitude. But he learned, ere he had been long a resident in Avenel, that his grandmother had died at Cologne, in the performance of a penance too severe for her age, which she had taken upon herself in behalf of the Queen and Church of Scotland, so soon as she heard of the defeat at Langside. The zeal of the Abbot Ambrosius was more regulated; but he retired into the Scottish convent of —, and so lived there, that the fraternity were inclined to claim for him the honours of canonisation. But he guessed their purpose, and prayed them, on his death-bed, to do no honours to the body of one so sinful as themselves; but to send his body and his heart to be buried in Avenel burial-ale, in the monastery of Saint Mary's, that the last Abbot of that celebrated house of devotion might sleep among its ruins.

Long before that period arrived, Roland Avenel was wedded to Catherine Seyton, who, after two years' residence with her unhappy mistress, was dismissed, upon her being subjected to closer restraint than had been at first exercised. She returned to her father's house, and as Roland was acknowledged for the successor and lawful heir of the ancient house of Avenel, greatly increased as the estate was by the providence of Sir Halbert Glendinning, there occurred no objections to the match on the part of her family. Her mother was recently dead when she first entered the convent; and her father, in the unsettled times which followed Queen Mary's flight to England, was not averse to an alliance with a youth, who, himself loyal to Queen Mary, still held some influence, through means of Sir Halbert Glendinning, with the party in power.

Roland and Catherine, therefore, were united, spite of their differing faiths; and the White Lady, whose apparition had been infrequent when the house of Avenel seemed verging to extinction, was seen to sport by her haunted wall, with a score of gold around her bosom as broad as the halberd of an Earl.

• See Note T. *Detail of the Abbot's History to the Avenel Aisle*

NOTES

23

The Abbot.

Note A. — GLENDOFWNE OF GLENDOFWNE

This was a house of ancient descent and superior consequence, including persons who fought at Bannockburn and Otterburn, and closely connected by alliance and friendship with the great Barls of Douglas. The Knights in the story argue as most Scotsmen would do in his situation, for all of the same clan are popularly considered as descended from the same stock, and as having a right to the ancestral honour of the chief branch. This opinion, though sometimes ideal, is so strong, even at this day of innovation, that it may be observed as a national difference between my countrymen and the English. If you ask an Englishman of good birth, whether a person of the same name be connected with him, he answers, (if *he doubts*), "No — he is a mere namesake." Ask a similar question of a Scot, (I mean a Scotsman,) he replies — "He is one of our clan; I careen there is a relationship, though I do not know how distant." The Englishman thinks of discountenancing a species of rivalry in society; the Scotsman's answer is grounded on the ancient idea of strengthening the clan.

Note B. — ORIEL OF SAINT CUTHBERT.

I may here observe, that this is entirely an ideal scene. Saint Cuthbert, a person established sanctity had, no doubt, several places of worship on the Borders, where H. Bourke, whilst living; but Tillmouth Chapel is the only one which bears some resemblance to the hermitage described in the text. It has, indeed, a well, famous for gratifying three wishes for every worshipper who shall quaff the fountain with sufficient belief in its efficacy. At this spot the Saint is said to have landed in his stone coffin, in which he called down the Tweed from Melrose, and here the stone coffin long lay, in evidence of the fact. The late Sir Francis Blake Delaval is said to have taken the exact measure of the coffin, and to have ascertained, by hydrostatic principles, that it might have actually swum. A profane farmer in the neighbourhood announced his intention of converting this last bed of the Saint into a trough for his swine; but the prohibition was rendered impossible, either by the Saint, or by some pious votary in his behalf, for on the following morning the stone sarcophagus was found broken in two fragments. Tillmouth Chapel, with these points of resemblance, lies, however, in exactly the opposite direction to Melrose, which the supposed cell of Saint Cuthbert is said to have borne towards Kennaquhair.

Note C. — GENE-HAWE.

The comparison is taken from some beautiful verses in an old ballad, entitled *Faint Footings*, published in the "Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border." A devoted queen, to preserve her infant son from the traitors who have slain his father, entrusts him with the female offspring of a faithful friend, and goes on to direct the education of the children, and the various signals by which the parents are to hear news each of her own offspring.

"And yett shall hear my gay good-bairn
Right well to know a word;
And so will I your little dar, /
As well to wail and sing."

"And ye shal hear my gay good-bairn
Right well to know a word;
And so will I your little dar, /
As well to wail and sing."

"At high or market which we meet,
We'll have make us greet;
But, 'twixt, how dare my gay good-bairn
Merrily, how dare my dar?"

Note D. — MONASTERY OF SAINT BENEDICT.

The end of Saint Cuthbert, is an imaginary scene, and the scene of the destruction of the monastery.

from a story told me by my father. In his youth — it may be near eighty years since, as he was born in 1739 — he had occasion to visit an old lady who resided in a Border castle of considerable renown. Only one very limited portion of the extensive ruins suited for the accommodation of the inmates, and my father amused himself by wandering through the part that was untenanted. In a dining apartment, having a roof richly adorned with arches and drops, there was deposited a large stack of hay, to which calves were helping themselves from opposite sides. As my father was scaling a dark ruinous turnpike staircase, his greyhound ran up before him, and probably was the means of saving his life, for the animal fell through a trap-door, or aperture in the stair, thus warning the owner of the danger of the ascent. As the dog continued howling from a great depth, my father got the old butler, who alone knew most of the localities about the castle, to unlock a sort of stable, in which Kitt-buck was found safe and sound, the place being filled with the same commodity which littered the stalls of Augeas, and which had rendered the dog's fall as easy one.

Note E. — NUN OF KENT.

A fanatic nun, called the Holy Maid of Kent, who pretended to the gift of prophecy and power of miracles. Having denounced the doom of speedy death against Henry VIII. for his marriage with Anne Boleyn, the prophesy was attained in Parliament, and executed with her accomplice. Her imposture was for a time so successful, that even Sir Thomas More was disposed to be a believer.

Note F. — ABBOT OF UNRAMEAN.

We learn from no less authority than that of Napoleon Bonaparte, that there is but a single step between the sublime and ridiculous; and it is a transition from one extreme to another, so very easy, that the vulgar of every degree are peculiarly captivated with it. Thus the inclination to laugh becomes uncontrollable, when the solemnity and gravity of time, place, and circumstances, render it peculiarly improper. Some species of general Heresie, like that which inspired the ancient Saturnalia, or the modern Carnival, has been commonly indulged to the people at all times and in almost all countries. But it was, I think, peculiar to the Roman Catholic Church, that while they studied how to render their church rites imposing and magnificent, by all that pomp, music, architecture, and external display could add to them, they nevertheless contrived, upon special occasions, at the Altars of the vain vulgar, who, in almost all Catholic countries, enjoyed, or at least assumed, the privileges of making some Lord of the revels, who, under the name of the Abbot of Unremean, the Boy Bishop, or the President of Fools, occupied the churches, preached the holy shows by a mock imitation of the sacred rites, and sang indecent parodies on hymns of the church. The extravagance of the clergy, even when their power was greatest, to the indecent exhibitions which they always tolerated, and sometimes encouraged, forms a strong contrast to the sanctity with which they regarded any serious attempt, by preaching or writing, to impeach any of the doctrines of the church. It could only be compared to the singular apathy with which they regarded, and often admired the gross novels which Chaucer, Spenser, Bunyan, Rabelais, and others, composed upon the last month of the clergy. It could not be the churchmen, who, however, had endeavored to condescend to the vulgar, and allowed them occasionally to gratify their coarse humor, by indecent satire, provided they would shew some any good question concerning the foundation of the doctrines on which was erected such an immense fabric of ecclesiastical power.

But the spirit of the Reformation assumed a very different appearance, as soon as the Protestant churches began to prevail, and the reform which their founders carried out in most safety of heart, and without the least intention of obstructing religion by their follies, were now preserved in by the common people as a mode of twisting their utter disregard for the Reformation principles and its consequences.

the said condemnit cordons, past down to the Netherbow, to have past furth thair; but becaus the sumers on their coming thairto was close, that past up agane the Hie street of the said burgh to the Castill, and in this monytime the said provost and bailies and their assistants being in the writing bairn of the said Alex. Gushie, past and enterit in the said tolbutt, and in the said towne passag up the Hie street, then schote furth thairst at thame ane dog, and hurt ane second the said childer. This being done, thair was nothing vild but the ane perle schot out and outsped sumer furth of the said tolbutt, and the vther perle schot out in the same again. And sene the craftmen's servandis, about wright, held and inclosed the said provost and bailies continewalle in the said tolbutt, frae three hours afternoon, quhill eight hours at even, and an man of the said town prentis to relieve thair said provost and bailies. And then thair went to the masters of the Castill, to cause them if thair mycht stay the said servandis, quha micht ane runner to do the same, but thair could not bring the same to ane small end, for the said servandis wold on no wayes stay frae, quhill thair had revengit the hurting of ane of them; and thairfor the constable of the castill come down thairin, and he with the said masters treatet betwix the said ptes in this manner:—"That the said provost and bailies sail remit to the said craftchilder, all action, crime, and offenses that thair had committit aganis thame in any thyme bygane; and hand and oblat thame never to pursue thair thair; and als commandit thair masters to ransom thame aganis in thair services, as thair did ofore. And this being proclamit at the mercat cross, thair sallit, and the said provost and bailies come furth of the same tolbutth." &c. &c. &c.

John Knox, who writes at large upon this tumult, informs us it was inflamed by the denuncs of craftes, who, resting the superiority assumed over them by the magistrates, would yield no assistance to put down the tumult. "They will be magistrates none," said the recusant denuncs, "e'en let thair rule the populace alone!" and accordingly they came quietly to take their four-hour's game, and left the magistrates to help themselves as they could. Many persons were excommunicated for this outrage, and not admitted to church ordinances till they had made satisfaction.

NOTE L.——INABILITY OF EVIL SPIRITS TO ENTER A HOUSE UNWITTED.

There is a popular belief respecting evil spirits, that they cannot enter an inhabited house unless invited, may dragged over the threshold. There is an instance of the same superstition in the Tale of the Gelli, wherein an enchantress is supposed to have intruded herself into the Divan of the Sultan.

"Thus," said the illustrious Mimar, "let the enemies of Mahomet be dismayed! but inform me, O ye sages! under the semblance of which of your brethren did that foul enchantress so audaciously enter here?" "May the lord of my heart," answered Gellin, the hermit of the faithful from Quenda, "triumph over all his foes! As I travelled on the mountains from Quenda, and saw neither the footprints of beasts, nor the flight of birds, behold, I chanced to pass through a cavern, in whose hollow sides I found this accursed age, to whom I unfolded the invitation of the Sultan of India, and we, joining, journeyed towards the Divan; but ere we entered, he said unto me, 'Put thy hand forth, and pull me towards thee into the Divan, calling on the name of Mahomet, for the evil spirits are on me, and vex me.' I have understood that many parts of these fine tales, and in particular that of the Sultan Mimar, were taken from genuine Oriental sources by the editor, Mr James Ridley.

But the most picturesque use of this popular belief occurs in Coleridge's beautiful and tantalising fragment of Christabel. Has not our own imaginative poet cause to fear that future ages will desire to smother him from his place of rest, as Milton longed

"To call him up, who left half told
The story of Chaucer's bold?"

The verses I refer to are when Christabel conducts into her father's castle a mysterious and malevolent being, under the guise of a distressed female stranger.

"They overthrew the moat, and Christabel
Took the key that fitted well;
A little dawn she opened straight,
All in the middle of the gate;
So gait that one leapt within and without,
Where an army in battle array had march'd out.

"The lady shriek, bellie through pain,
And crashed with might and main
Lifted her up, a weary wretch,
Down the threshold of the gate
Then the lady ran again,
And inward on the tower not in pain.

"So free from danger, free from fear,
They guard the court;—sight glad they were,
And Christabel demurely cried
To the lady by her side:

"Forth we the Virgin, all divine,
We both recedeth thus from this distress
Alas! she said, 'Christabel,
I cannot speak from weakness,
My heart from danger, ere I can
Now repeat the story: right glad they were."

NOTE K.——SEXTON, OR SEXTON

George, fifth Lord Seton, was immovably fastidius in Queen Mary during all the mutabilities of her fortune. He was grand master of the household, in which capacity he had a picture painted of himself, with his official baton, and the following motto:—

*In adversitate, patienti;
In prosperitate, benevolens.
Homo, per se, per se.*

On various parts of his castle he inscribed, as expressing his religious and political creed, the legend,

Un Dieu, un Roy, un Roy, un Roy.

He declined to be promoted to an earldom, which Queen Mary offered him at the same time when she advanced her natural brother to be Earl of Mar, and afterwards of Murray. On his refusing this honour, Mary wrote, or caused to be written, the following lines in Latin and French:—

*Sunt comites, ducemque illi; sunt domique reges;
Necnon domumque alii esse esse mihi.
Il y a des comtes, des ducs, des ducs; ainsi
C'est aussi pour moi d'être seigneur de l'un.*

Which may be thus rendered:—

Earl, duke, or king, be thou that list to be;
Earl, thy lordship is enough for me.

"This distich reminds us of the 'pride which apped humility,' in the motto of the house of Couci:

*Je suis un roy, si prince aussi;
Je suis le seigneur de Coucy.*

After the battle of Langside, Lord Seton was obliged to retire abroad for safety, and was an exile for two years, during which he was reduced to the necessity of driving a waggon in Flanders for his subsistence. He rose to favour in James VI.'s reign, and resuming his paternal property, had himself painted in his waggoner's dress, and in the act of driving a wain with four horses, on the north end of a stately gallery at Seton Castle. He appears to have been fond of the arts; for there exists a beautiful family-piece of him in the centre of his family. Mr Pinkerton, in his Scottish Iconography, published an engraving of this curious portrait. The original is the property of Lord Bonarville, nearly connected with the Seton family, and is at present at his lordship's stately villa of the Pavilion, near Melrose.

NOTE L.——THE RESIGNATION OF QUEEN MARY.

The details of this remarkable event are, as given in the preceding chapter, imaginary; but the outline of the events is historical. Sir Robert Lindsay, brother to the author of the Memoirs, was at first intrusted with the delicate commission of persuading the imprisoned queen to resign her crown. As he flatly refused to interfere, they determined to send the Lord Lindsay, one of the rudest and most violent of their own faction, with instructions, first to use fair persuasions, and if these did not succeed, to enter into harder terms. Knox associates Lord Rennie with Lindsay in this shameful commission. He was the son of that Lord Rennie who was prime agent in the murder of Rizzio; and little mercy was to be expected from his conjunction with Lindsay.

The employment of such rude tools argued a resolution on the part of those who had the Queen's person in their power, to proceed to the utmost extremities should they find Mary obstinate. To avoid this pressing danger, Sir Robert Melville was dispatched by them to Lochleven, carrying with him, concealed in the neighbourhood of his sword, letters to the Queen from the Earl of Arbroath, Master of Lochnagar, and even from Tormarton, the English ambassador, who was then favourable to the unfortunate Mary, conjuring her to yield to the necessity of the times, and to subscribe such deeds as Lindsay should lay before her, without being startled by their tenor; and assuring her that her doing so, in the state of captivity under which she was placed, would neither, in law, honour, nor conscience, be binding upon her when she should obtain her liberty. Submitting to the advice of one part of her subjects to the names of the others, and hearing that Lindsay was arrived in a boasting, that is, threatening, manner, the Queen, "with some reluctancy, and with tears," said Knox, "submitted one deed resigning her crown to her infant son, and another establishing the Earl of Murray regent. It seems agreed by historians, that Lindsay behaved with great brutality on the occasion. The deeds were signed 24th July, 1567.

NOTE M.——DE LOCH LEVEN.

At Scottish fairs, the balls, or wassails, depicted as the lord in whose name the meeting is held, attend the fair with his guard, doublet, trifling dress, and periwinkle on the spot any petty delinquencies. His standards are usually small with banners, and, sometimes at least, escorted by music. Thus, to

the "Life and Death of Habbie Simpson," we are told of that famous minstrel, —

"At him he play'd before the queen-come,
And softly croon'd in their presence; —
Soft ballads, jacks, and gowds there, clear thro',
Like any band;
Now wha shall play before an' ye'll come,
Habbie's dees't!"

Note N. — THE DARK GRAY MAN.

By an ancient, though improbable tradition, the Douglasses are said to have derived their name from a champion who had greatly distinguished himself in an action. When the king demanded by whom the battle had been won, the attendants are said to have answered, "Sholto Douglass, sir," which is said to mean, "Yonder dark gray man." But the name is undoubtedly territorial, and taking from Douglas river and vale.

Note O. — SUPPOSED CONSPIRACY AGAINST THE LIFE OF MARY.

A romantic, to use a Scottish phrase, wants but a hair to make a tetter of. The whole detail of the steward's supposed conspiracy against the life of Mary, is grounded upon an expression in one of her letters, which affirms, that Jasper Dryden, one of the Laird of Lochleven's servants, had threatened to murder William Douglas, (for his share in the Queen's escape,) and averred that he would plant a dagger in Mary's own heart. — CHALMERS' *Life of Queen Mary*, vol. I. p. 278.

Note P. — MUFFLED MAN.

Generally, a disguised man; originally, one who wears the cloak or mantle muffled round the lower part of the face to conceal his countenance. I have on an ancient piece of iron the representation of a robber thus accoutred, endeavoring to make his way into a house, and opposed by a man, to whom he in vain offers food. The motto is *aperiti domus fides*. It is a part of a fire-grate said to have belonged to Archbishop Sharpe.

Note Q. — DEMEANOUR OF QUEEN MARY.

In the dangerous expedition to Aberdeenshire, Randolph, the English ambassador, gives Cecil the following account of Queen Mary's demeanour: —

"In all those parables, I assure your honour, I never saw the Queen merrier, never dismayed; nor never thought I that stomach to be in her that I find. She repeated nothing but, when the Lords and others, at Inverness, came in the morning from the watches, that she was not a man to know what life it was to lie all night in the fields, or to walk upon the gateway with a jack and a knapsack, a Glasgow huckster, and a broadsword." — RANDOLPH to Cecil, September 18, 1582.

The writer of the above letter seems to have said the same impression which Catherine Seyton, in the text, considered as proper to the Queen's presence among her armed subjects.

"Though we neither thought nor looked for other than on that day to have fought or never — what desperate blows would not have been given, when every man should have fought in the sight of so noble a Queen, and so many fair ladies, our enemies to have taken them from us, and we to save our honours, not to be put of them, your honour can easily judge!" — *The same to the same, September 24, 1582.*

Note R. — ESCAPE OF QUEEN MARY FROM LOCHLEVEN.

It is well known that the escape of Queen Mary from Lochleven was effected by George Douglas, the youngest brother of Sir William Douglas, the lord of the castle; but the minute circumstances of the event have been a good deal confused, owing to two agents having been employed in it who bore the same name. It has been supposed that George Douglas was induced to assist Mary's escape by the nobles; but that, by such service, he might merit her hand. But his purpose was discovered by his brother Sir William, and he was expelled from the castle. He continued, notwithstanding, to hover in the neighbourhood, and maintain a correspondence with the royal prisoner and others in the fortress.

If we believe the English ambassador Drury, the Queen was gratified to George Douglas, and even proposed a marriage with him; a scheme which could hardly be serious, since she was still the wife of Bothwell, but which, if adopted at all, might be with a purpose of gratifying the Regent Murray's ambition, and preventing an in-law; since he was, it must be remembered, the brother-in-law of George Douglas, for whom such high honour was said to be designed.

The proposal, if seriously made, was treated as inadmissible, and Mary again resumed her purpose of escape. Her failure in her first attempt has been pictured in various particulars, which might have been advantageously introduced in this narrative. Drury made Cecil the following account of the matter: —

"But after, upon the 26th of the last, (April 1567,) she interrupted an escape, and was the rather not effect, through her accustomed long lying in bed all the morning. The manner

of it was thus: there cometh in to her the launceson early at other times before she was wakened, and the Queen according to such a secret practice putteth on her the hood of the lam dress, and so with the fardel of clothes and the muffler upon her face, passeth out and entereth the boat to pass the Loch; which, after some space, one of them that stood and merrily, 'Let us see what manner of dame this is,' and therewith offered to pull down her muffler, which to defend, she put up her hands, which they applied to be very fair and white; whereupon they assured kyle suspicion whom she was, beginning to wonder at her enterprise. Whereat she was little dismayed, but charged them, upon danger of their lives, to row her over to the shore, which they nothing regarded, but oftentimes rowed her back again, promising her it should be secreted, and especially from the lord of the house, under whose guard she layeth. It seemeth she knew her refuge, and where to have found it if she had once landed; for there did, and yet do linger, at a little village called Kinross, hard at the Loch side, the name George Douglas, one Campbell and one Beton, the which two were sometime her trusty servants, and, as yet speaketh, they bind her no less affection." — BURNES KERRIE'S *History of the Affairs of Church and State in Scotland*, p. 480.

Notwithstanding this disappointment, little spoke of by historians, Mary renewed her attempts to escape. There was in the Castle of Lochleven a lad, named William Douglas, some relation probably of the baron, and about eighteen years old. This youth proved as accessible to Queen Mary's prayer and promise, as was the brother of his patron, George Douglas, from whom this William must be certainly kept distinct. It was young William who played the part commonly assigned to his superior, George, stealing the keys of the castle from the table on which they lay, while his lord was at supper. He let the Queen and a waiting woman out of the apartment where they were secured, and out of the tower itself, embarked with them in a small skiff, and rowed them to the shore. To prevent pursuit, he, for precaution's sake, locked the iron grated door of the tower, and threw the keys into the lake. Then found George Douglas and the Queen's servant, Beton, waiting for them, and Lord Seyton and James Hamilton of Orkney in attendance, at the head of a party of faithful followers, with whom they fled to Niddrie Castle, and from thence to Hamilton.

In narrating this romantic story, both history and tradition confuse the two Douglasses together, and confer on George the successful execution of the escape from the castle, the merit of which belongs in reality, to the boy called William, or more frequently, the Little Douglas, either from his youth or his slight stature. The reader will observe, that in the romance, the part of the Little Douglas has been assigned to Roland Grange. In neither case, it would be tedious to point out in a work of amusement such minute points of historical fact; but the general interest taken in the fate of Queen Mary, renders every thing of consequence which connects itself with her misfortunes.

Note S. — BATTLE OF LANGSIDE.

I am informed in the most polite manner, by D. MacVean, Esq. of Glasgow, that I have been in error in my locality, in giving an account of the battle of Langside. Crookstone Castle, he observes, lies four miles west from the field of battle, and rather in the rear of Murray's army. The real place from which Mary saw the rout of her last army, was Cathcart Castle, which, being a mile and a half east from Langside, was situated in the rear of the Queen's own army. I was led astray in the present case, by the authority of my deceased friend, James Graham, the excellent and amiable author of the *Scotsman*, in his drama on the subject of Queen Mary; and by a traditional report of Mary having seen the battle from the Castle of Crookstone, which seemed so much to increase the interest of the scene, that I have been unwilling to make, in this particular instance, the fiction give way to the fact, which last is undoubtedly in favour of Mr MacVean's system.

It is singular how tradition, which is sometimes a sure guide to truth, is so often at variance to modern history. The celebrated field of battle at Killiecrankie, the traveller is struck with one of those rugged pillars of rough stone, which indicate the scenes of ancient conflict. A friend of the author, well acquainted with the circumstances of the battle, was standing near this large stone, and looking on the same ground, when a Highland shepherd hurried down from the hill to offer his services as a clew, and proceeded to inform him, that Dundee was slain at that stone, which was raised to his memory. "Is Donald?" answered my friend, "how can you tell such a story to a stranger? I am sure you know well enough that Dundee was killed at a considerable distance from this place, near the house of Finlay, and that this stone was here long before the battle, in 1633." "Och! och!" said Donald, "we may be mistaken," and your honour's in the right, and I see you had a short life. And he was killed on the spot neither, but lived till the next morning; but of the famous gentlemen like best to hear he was killed at the great stone." It is on the same principle of pleasing my readers, that I repeat the Crookstone Castle instead of the Cathcart Castle. But, however, the author has taken a liberty in removing the actual field of battle somewhat to the eastward, he has been tolerably strict in adhering to the incidents of the engagement.

it will appear from a comparison of events in the novel, with the following account from an old writer.

The Heriot was out on foot and his company, except the Laird of Grange, Alexander Home of Mansfield, and some borderers to the number of two hundred. The Laird of Grange had already viewed the ground, and with an imaginable diligence caused every person to take behind him a trock of the Regent's, to guard behind them, and rode with speed to the head of Grange hill, and set down the footmen with their cut-throats at the head of a straight lane, where there were some cottage houses and yards of great advantage. Which soldiers with their continual shot killed divers of the vaunt guard, led by the Hamiltons, who, courageously and bravely ascending up the hill, were already out of breath, when the Regent's vaunt guard joined with them. Where the worthy Lord Home fought on foot with his pike in his hand very bravely, assisted by the Laird of Grange, his brother-in-law, who helped him up again when he was stricken to the ground by many cryes upon his side, throwing the pike at him after they had been discharged. He was also wounded with staves, and had many strokes of spears through his legs; for he and Grange, at the joining, cried to let their adversaries first lay down their spears, to hear up them, which spears were so thick fixed in the others' backs, that some of the pikes and great staves that were thrown by them which were behind might be seen lying upon the ground.

"Lord the Queen's side the Earl of Argyll commanded the battle, and the Laird of Argyll the vaunt guard. But the Regent committed to the Laird of Grange the spiritual care, as being an experienced captain, to oversee every danger, and to ride to every wing, to encourage and make help where greatest need was. He perceived, at the first joining, the right wing of the Regent's vaunt guard put back, and like to fly, whereof the greatest part were common of the barony of Kent; whereas he rode to them, and told them that their enemy was already turning their backs, requesting them to stay and defend till he should bring them from men's forth of the battle. Whither at full speed he did ride alone, and told the Regent that the enemy were shaken and flying away behind the little village, and desired a few number of fresh men to go with him. Where he found enough willing, as the Lord Home, the Laird of Locheleven, Sir James Ralston, and all the Regent's servants, who followed him with diligence, and reinforced that wing which was beginning to fly; which fresh men with their horse weapons struck the enemies in their flank and there, which forced them incontinently to give place and turn back after long fighting and pushing others to and fro with their spears. There were not many horsemen to pursue after them, and the Regent cried to save and not to kill, and Grange was never cruel, so that there were few slain but taken. And the only slaughter was at the first rencounter by the shot of the soldiers, which Grange had planted at the entrance of behind some hills."

It is remarkable that, while passing through the small town of Heriot some partisans, adherents of the House of Lennox, attempting to arrest Queen Mary and her attendants, were obliged to make way for her, not without slaughter.

1 This should be Rutherglen.

JOSE T. BURIAL OF THE ARMOUR PLATE IN THE ABERNETHY ABBEY.

This was not the explanation of the incident of something of the heart, mentioned in the introduction to the tale, which the author originally intended. It was designed to refer to the heart of Robert Bruce. It is generally known that that great monarch, being on his death-bed, bequeathed to the good Lord James of Douglas, the task of carrying his heart to the Holy Land, to fulfil in a certain degree his own desire to perform a crusade. Upon Douglas's death, fighting against the Moors in Spain, a sort of nobleman of fortune to which he could have pleaded no regular right at all, his followers brought back the Bruce's heart, and buried it in the Abbey church of Melrose, the Monastery of Melrose.

The Abbey had been almost completely destroyed by the

Bruce. We have already seen his extreme anxiety that each of the reverend brethren should be daily supplied with a service of boiled salmon, eggs and milk, pence, or the like, to be called the King's mess, and that without the ordinary service of their table being either disturbed in quantity or quality. But this was not the only mark of the humanity of good King Robert towards the monks of Melrose, who were the monks of the famous Melrose, who he bequeathed to the Abbey of Melrose the site of two houses, and a small church, for rebuilding the church of St. Mary's, ruined by the English; and about in 1160 or no doubt that the principal part of the remains which now display such exquisite specimens of Gothic architecture, at its very greatest period, had their origin in this munificent donation. The money was to be paid out of crown lands, estates forfeited to the King, and other property or possessions of the crown.

A very curious letter written to his son about three weeks before his death, has been pointed out to me by my friend Mr. Thomas Thomson, Deputy-Register for Scotland. It enlarges so much on the love of the royal writer to the community of Melrose, that it is well worthy of being inserted in a work connected in some degree with Scottish History.

LITTERA DOMINI REGIS ROBERTI AD FILIUM SUUM DAVID

"Robertus dei gratia Rex Scottorum David precordialis filio suo ac cu curis successibus suis; Salutem, et sic deus prospera teneat, ut cum san benedictionis possit regnare. Fili carissime, digno cunctis videtur filius, qui, paternis in bonis moribus imitans, piam ejus nititur aequum voluntatem; nec propterea sibi sumi nomen heredis, qui subitibus predecessoris affectibus non adheret. Cupientes igitur, ut piam affectionem et cunctis ram dilectionem, quam erga monasterium de Melrose, ubi cur nostrum ex specialis devotionis disposicionis tumulandum, et erga Religiosos ibidem Deo servientes, ipsorum viti sanctissima nos ad nos excitamus, concipiamus, Tu ceteris quoniam moris nos adhibere debemus, ut, ex vestre dilectionis affectu deus Religiosos nostri causa post mortem nostram cunctis, ipsi pro nobis ad orandum ferventia et forciter animetur. Vobis precipimus quantum possumus, instantem supplicamus, et ex toto corde injungimus, Quatinus avagationibus quas eisdem viris Religiosis et fabrica Ecclesie sue de opere fecimus ac eadem omnibus aliis donationibus nostris, ipsos libere gaudere permittimus, Tamen potius si necesse fuerit sustentantes quam diminuentes ipsorum petitiones auxilio benevolenti admittamus, ac ipsos contra suos inveteratos et cunctis pia dilectione protegentes. Hanc autem exhortationem supplicationem et preceptum tu, fili ceterique successores nostri, prestanti animo complere curetis, si nostram benedictionem habere velitis, una cum benedictionis filii nostri Regis, qui filios docuit patrum voluntates in bono perficere, auctorem in mundum ac vestram cum ut eam voluntatem faceret et paterem. In testamento autem nostre devotionis erga locum predictum sit a nobis dilectum et electum conceptis, presentem litteram Religiosis predictis dimittimus, nostris successoribus in posterum commendamus. Data apud Caedres, undecimo die Julii, Anno Regni nostri vicesimo quarto."

If this charter be altogether genuine, and there is no appearance of forgery it gives rise to a curious doubt in Scottish history. The letter announces that the King had already bequeathed his heart to be deposited at Melrose. The resolution to send it to Palestine, under the charge of Douglas, must have been entered earliest 11th May 1294, the date of the letter, and 7th June of the same year, when the Bruce died; or else we must suppose that the commission of Douglas extended not only to taking the Bruce's heart to Palestine, but to bringing it safe back to its final place of deposit in the Abbey of Melrose.

It would not be worth inquiring by what caprice the author was induced to throw the incident of the Bruce's heart entirely out of all the story, save merely to say that he found himself unable to fill up the canon he had intended, and introduced to present the management of the superstitious machinery with which his plan, when it was first conceived, was connected and combined.

RED GAUNTLET

BY SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART. •

COPYRIGHT EDITION



SCENE ON THE ROAD

“The feats of one horseman in particular called forth so repeatedly the clamorous shouts of his companions that the very banks ringed in with their shouts.”

EDINBURGH
ADAM AND CHARLES BLACK

1853

Redgauntlet.

A TALE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

Master, go on; and I will follow thee,
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.
As Ye'll like it.

INTRODUCTION—(1682.)

THE Jacobite enthusiasm of the eighteenth century, particularly during the rebellion of 1745, afforded a theme, perhaps the finest that could be selected for fictitious composition, founded upon real or probable incident. This civil war, and its remarkable events, were remembered by the existing generation without any degree of the bitterness of spirit which seldom fails to attend internal dissension. The Highlanders, who formed the principal strength of Charles Edward's army, were an ancient and high spirited race, peculiar in their habits of war and of peace, brave to romance, and exhibiting a character turning upon points more adapted to poetry than to the prose of real life. Their Prince, young, valiant, patient of fatigue, and despising danger, heading his army on foot in the most toilsome marches, and defeating a regular force in three battles, all these were circumstances fascinating to the imagination, and might well be supposed to seduce young and enthusiastic minds to the cause in which they were found united, although wisdom and reason frowned upon the enterprise.

The adventurous Prince, as is well known, proved to be one of those personages who distinguish themselves during some single and extraordinarily brilliant period of their lives, like the course of a shooting star, at which men wonder, as well on account of the briefness, as the brilliancy of its splendour. A long trace of darkness overshadowed the subsequent life of a man, who, in his youth, shewed himself so capable of great undertakings; and, without the painful task of tracing his course further, we may say, the latter pursuits and habits of this unhappy Prince, are those painfully evincing a broken heart, which seeks refuge from its own thoughts in sordid enjoyments.

Still, however, it was long after Charles Edward appeared to be, perhaps it was long ere he altogether became, so much degraded from his original self; as he enjoyed for a time the lustre attending

the progress and termination of his enterprise. Those who thought they discerned in his subsequent conduct an insensibility to the distresses of his followers, coupled with that egotistical attention to his own interests, which has been often attributed to the Stewart Family, and which is the natural effect of the principles of divine right in which they were brought up, were now generally considered as dissatisfied and splanetic persons, who, displeased with the issue of their adventure, and finding themselves involved in the ruins of a falling cause, indulged themselves in undeserved reproaches against their leader. Indeed, such censures were by no means frequent among those of his followers, who, if what was alleged had been just, held the best right to complain. Far the greater number of those unfortunate gentlemen suffered with the most dignified patience, and were either too proud to take notice of ill treatment on the part of their Prince, or so prudent as to be aware their complaints would meet with little sympathy from the world. It may be added, that the greater part of the banished Jacobites, and those of high rank and consequence, were not much within reach of the influence of the Prince's character and conduct, whether well regulated or otherwise.

In the meantime, that great Jacobite conspiracy, of which the insurrection of 1745-6 was but a small part, precipitated into action on the failure of a far more general scheme, was resumed and again put into motion by the Jacobites of England, whose force had never been broken, as they had prudently avoided bringing it into the field. The surprising effect which had been produced by small means, in 1745-6, animated their hopes for more important successes, when the whole monjuring interest of Britain, identified as it then was with great part of the landed gentlemen, should come forward to finish what had been gallantly attempted by a few Highland chiefs.

It is probable, indeed, that the Jacobites of the day were incapable of considering that the very

small scale on which the effort was made, was in one great measure the cause of its unexpected success. The remarkable speed with which the insurgents marched, the singularly good discipline which they preserved, the union and unanimity which for some time animated their councils, were all in a considerable degree produced by the smallness of their numbers. Notwithstanding the discomfiture of Charles Edward, the nonjurors of the period long continued to nurse unlawful schemes, and to drink treasonable toasts, until age stole upon them. Another generation arose, who did not share the sentiments which they cherished; and at length the sparkles of disaffection, which had long smouldered, but had never been heated enough to burst into actual flame, became entirely extinguished. But in proportion as the political enthusiasm died gradually away among men of ordinary temperament, it influenced those of warm imaginations and weak understandings, and hence wild schemes were formed, as desperate as they were adventurous.

Thus a young Scottishman of rank is said to have stooped so low as to plot the surprisal of St James's palace, and the assassination of the royal family. While these ill-digested and desperate conspiracies were agitated among the few Jacobites who still adhered with more obstinacy to their purpose, there is no question but that other plots might have been brought to an open explosion, had it not suited the policy of Sir Robert Walpole, rather to prevent or disable the conspirators in their projects, than to promulgate the tale of danger, which might thus have been believed to be more widely diffused than was really the case.

In one instance alone this very prudent and humane line of conduct was departed from, and the event seemed to confirm the policy of the general course. Doctor Archibald Cameron, brother of the celebrated Donald Cameron of Lochiel, attainted for the rebellion of 1745, was found by a party of soldiers lurking with a comrade in the wilds of Loch Katrine, five or six years after the battle of Culloden, and was there seized. There were circumstances in his case, so far as was made known to the public, which attracted much compassion, and gave to the judicial proceedings against him an appearance of cold-blooded revenge on the part of government; and the following argument of a zealous Jacobite in his favour, was received as conclusive by Dr Johnson, and other persons who might pretend to impartiality. Dr Cameron had never borne arms, although engaged in the Rebellion, but used his medical skill for the service, indifferently, of the wounded of both parties. His return to Scotland was ascribed exclusively to family affairs. His behaviour at the bar was decent, firm, and respectful. His wife threw herself, on three different occasions, before George II. and the members of his family, was rudely repulsed from their presence, and at length placed, it was said, in the same prison with her husband, and confined with unmanly severity.

Dr Cameron was finally executed, with all the severities of the law of treason; and his death remains in popular estimation a dark blot upon the memory of George II., being almost publicly imputed to a mean and personal hatred of Donald Cameron of Lochiel, the sufferer's heroic brother.

Yet the fact was, that whether the execution of Archibald Cameron was political or otherwise, it might certainly have been justified, had the King's ministers so pleased, upon reasons of a public nature. The unfortunate sufferer had not come to the Highlands solely upon his private affairs, as was the general belief; but it was not judged prudent by the English ministry to let it be generally known that he came to inquire about a considerable sum of money which had been remitted from France to the friends of the exiled family. He had also a commission to hold intercourse with the well known M^rPherson of Cluny, chief of the clan Vourich, whom the Chevalier had left behind at his departure from Scotland in 1746, and who remained during two years of proscription and danger, skulking from place to place in the Highlands, and maintaining an uninterrupted correspondence between Charles and his friends. That Dr Cameron should have held a commission to assist this chief in raking together the dispersed ombers of disaffection, is in itself sufficiently natural, and, considering his political principles, in no respect dishonourable to his memory. But neither ought it to be imputed to George II., that he suffered the laws to be enforced against a person taken in the act of breaking them. When he lost his hazardous game, Dr Cameron only paid the forfeit which he must have calculated upon. The ministers, however, thought it proper to leave Dr Cameron's new schemes in concealment, lest, by divulging them, they had indicated the channel of communication which, it is now well known, they possessed to all the plots of Charles Edward. But it was equally ill advised and ungenerous to sacrifice the character of the king to the policy of the administration. Both points might have been gained by sparing the life of Dr Cameron after conviction, and limiting his punishment to perpetual exile.

These repeated and successive Jacobite plots rose and burst like bubbles on a fountain; and one of them, at least, the Chevalier judged of importance enough to induce him to risk himself within the dangerous precincts of the British capital. This appears from Dr King's Anecdotes of his Own Times.

"September, 1750. — I received a note from my Lady Primrose, who desired to see me immediately. As soon as I waited on her, she led me into her dressing-room, and presented me to ——" [the Chevalier, doubled.] "If I was surprised to find him there, I was still more astonished when he acquainted me with the motives which had induced him to hazard a journey to England at this juncture. The impatience of his friends who were in exile, had

formed a scheme which was impracticable; but although it had been as feasible as they had represented it to him, yet no preparation had been made, nor was any thing ready to carry it into execution. He was soon convinced that he had been deceived; and, therefore, after a stay in London of five days only, he returned to the place from whence he came." Dr King was in 1780 a keen Jacobite, as may be inferred from the visit made by him to the Prince under such circumstances, and from his being one of that unfortunate person's chosen correspondents. He, as well as other men of sense and observation, began to despair of making their fortune in the party which they had chosen. It was indeed sufficiently dangerous; for, during the short visit just described, one of Dr King's servants remarked the stranger's likeness to Prince Charles, whom he recognized from the common busts.

The occasion taken for breaking up the Stewart interest, we shall tell in Dr King's own words:—"When he (Charles Edward) was in Scotland, he had a mistress whose name was Walkinshaw, and whose sister was at that time, and is still, house-keeper at Leicester House. Some years after he was released from his prison, and conducted out of France, he sent for this girl, who soon acquired such a dominion over him, that she was acquainted with all his schemes, and trusted with his most secret correspondence. As soon as this was known in England, all those persons of distinction who were attached to him were greatly alarmed: they imagined that this wench had been placed in his family by the English ministers; and, considering her sister's situation, they seemed to have some ground for their suspicion; wherefore, they despatched a gentleman to Paris, where the Prince then was, who had instructions to insist that Mrs. Walkinshaw should be removed to a convent for a certain term; but her gallant absolutely refused to comply with this demand; and although Mr M'Namara, the gentleman who was sent to him, who has a natural eloquence, and an excellent understanding, urged the most cogent reasons, and used all the arts of persuasion, to induce him to part with his mistress, and even proceeded so far as to assure him, according to his instructions, that an immediate interruption of all correspondence with his most powerful friends in England, and, in short, that the ruin of his interest, which was now daily increasing, would be the infallible consequence of his refusal; yet he continued inflexible, and all M'Namara's entreaties and remonstrances were ineffectual. M'Namara staid in Paris some days beyond the time prescribed him, endeavouring to reason the Prince into a better temper; but finding him obstinately perverse in his first answer, he took his leave with concern and indignation, saying, as he passed out, 'What has your family done, sir, this to draw down the vengeance of Heaven on every branch of it, through so many ages?' It is worthy of remark, that in all the conferences which

M'Namara had with the Prince on this occasion, the latter declared that it was not a violent passion, or indeed any particular regard, which attached him to Mrs Walkinshaw, and that he could see her removed from him without any concern; but he would not receive directions, in respect to his private conduct, from any man alive. When M'Namara returned to London, and reported the Prince's answer to the gentlemen who had employed him, they were astonished and confounded. However, they soon resolved on the measures which they were to pursue for the future, and determined no longer to serve a man who could not be persuaded to serve himself, and chose rather to endanger the lives of his best and most faithful friends, than part with an harlot, whom, as he often declared, he neither loved nor esteemed."

From this anecdote, the general truth of which is indubitable, the principal fault of Charles Edward's temper is sufficiently obvious. It was a high sense of his own importance, and an obstinate adherence to what he had once determined on—qualities which, if he had succeeded in his bold attempt, gave the nation little room to hope that he would have been found free from the love of prerogative and desire of arbitrary power, which characterized his unhappy grandfather. He gave a notable instance how far this was the leading feature of his character, when, for no reasonable cause that can be assigned, he placed his own single will in opposition to the necessities of France, which, in order to purchase a peace become necessary to the kingdom, was reduced to gratify Britain by prohibiting the residence of Charles within any part of the French dominions. It was in vain that France endeavoured to lessen the disgrace of this step by making the most flattering offers, in hopes to induce the Prince of himself to anticipate this disagreeable alternative, which, if seriously enforced, as it was likely to be, he had no means whatever of resisting, by leaving the kingdom as of his own free-will. Inspired, however, by the spirit of hereditary obstinacy, Charles preferred a useless resistance to a dignified submission and by a series of idle bravadoes, laid the French Court under the necessity of arresting their late ally, and sending him to close confinement in the Bastille, from which he was afterwards sent out of the French dominions, much in the manner in which a convict is transported to the place of his destination.

In addition to these repeated instances of a rash and inflexible temper, Dr King also adds faults alleged to belong to the Prince's character, of a kind less consonant with his noble birth and high pretensions. He is said by this author to have been avaricious, or parsimonious at least, to such a degree of meanness, as to fail, even when he had ample means, in relieving the sufferers who had lost their fortune, and sacrificed all in his ill-fated attempt.

1 The reproach is thus expressed by Dr King, who traces the charge:—"But the most odious part of his character is

We must receive, however, with some degree of jealousy what is said by Dr King on this subject, recollecting that he had left at least, if he did not desert, the standard of the unfortunate Prince, and was not therefore a person who was likely to form the fairest estimate of his virtues and faults. We must also remember, that if the exiled Prince gave little, he had but little to give, especially considering how late he nourished the scheme of another expedition to Scotland, for which he was long endeavouring to hoard money.

The case, also, of Charles Edward must be allowed to have been a difficult one. He had to satisfy numerous persons, who, having lost their all in his cause, had, with that all, seen the extinction of hopes which they accounted nearly as good as certainties; some of these were perhaps clamorous in their applications, and certainly ill pleased with their want of success. Other parts of the Chevalier's conduct may have afforded grounds for charging him with coldness to the sufferings of his devoted followers. One of these was a sentiment which has nothing in it that is generous, but it was certainly a principle in which the young Prince was trained, and which may be too probably denominated peculiar to his family, educated in all the high notions of passive obedience and non-resistance. If the unhappy Prince gave implicit faith to the professions of statesmen holding such notions, which is implied by his whole conduct, it must have led to the natural, though ungracious inference, that the services of a subject could not to whatever degree of ruin they might bring the individual, create a debt against his sovereign. Such a person could only boast that he had done his duty; nor was he entitled to be a claimant for a greater reward than it was convenient for the Prince to bestow, or to hold his sovereign his debtor for losses which he had sustained through his loyalty. To a certain extent the Jacobite principles inevitably led to this cold and egotistical mode of reasoning on the part of the sovereign; nor, with all our natural pity for the situation of royalty in distress, do we feel entitled to affirm that Charles did not use this opiate to his feelings, on viewing the misery of his followers, who he certainly possessed, though in no great degree, the means of affording them more relief than he practised.

His own history, after leaving France, is brief

his love of money, a vice which I do not remember to have been imputed by our historians to any of his ancestors, and is the certain index of a base and little mind. I know it may be urged in his vindication, that a Prince in exile ought to be an economist. And so he ought; but, nevertheless, his purse should be always open as long as there is any thing in it, to relieve the necessities of his friends and adherents. King Charles II., during his banishment, would have shared the last pottle in his pocket with his little family. But I have known this gentleman with two thousand louis-d'ors in his strong-box, pretend he was in great distress, and borrow money from a lady in Paris who was not in affluent circumstances. His most faithful servants, who had closely attended him in all his difficulties, were all rewarded." — *Knox's Memoirs.*

and melancholy. For a time he seems to have held the firm belief that Providence, which had borne him through so many hazards, still reserved him for some distant occasion, in which he should be empowered to vindicate the honour of his birth. But opportunity after opportunity slipped by unimproved, and the death of his father gave him the fatal proof that none of the principal powers of Europe were, after that event, likely to interest themselves in his quarrel. They refused to acknowledge him under the title of the King of England, and, on his part, he declined to be then recognized as the Prince of Wales.

Family discord came to add its sting to those of disappointed ambition; and, though a humiliating circumstance, it is generally acknowledged, that Charles Edward, the adventurous, the gallant, and the handsome, the leader of a race of pristine valour, whose romantic qualities may be said to have died along with him, had, in his latter days, yielded to those humiliating habits of intoxication, in which the meanest morals seek to drown the recollection of their disappointments and miseries. Under such circumstances, the unhappy Prince lost the friendship even of those faithful followers who had most devoted themselves to his misfortunes, and was surrounded, with some honourable exceptions, by men of a lower description, regardless of the character which he was himself no longer able to protect.

It is a fact consistent with the author's knowledge, that persons totally unentitled to, and unfitted for, such a distinction, were presented to the unfortunate Prince in moments unfit for presentation of any kind. Amid these clouds was at length extinguished the torch which once shook itself over Britain with such terrific glare, and at last sunk in its own ashes, scarce remembered and scarce noted.

Meantime, while the life of Charles Edward was gradually wasting in disappointed solitude, the number of those who had shared his misfortunes and dangers had shrunk into a small handful of veterans, the heroes of a tale which had been told. Most Scottish readers who can count the number of sixty years, must recollect many respected acquaintances of their youth, who, as the established phrase gently worded it, had been out in the Forty-five. It may be said, that their political principles and plans no longer either gained proselytes or attracted terror, — those who held, them had ceased to be the subjects either of fear or opposition. Jacobites were looked upon in society as men who had proved their sincerity by sacrificing their interest to their principles; and in well-regulated companies, it was held a piece of ill-breeding to injure their feelings or ridicule the compromises by which they endeavoured to keep themselves abreast of the current of the day. Such, for example, was the opinion of a gentleman of fortune in Perthshire, who, in having the newspapers read to him, caused the King and Queen to be dis-

nated by the initial letters of K. and Q., as if, by naming the full word, he might imply an acquiescence in the usurpation of the family of Hanover. George III., having heard of this gentleman's custom in the above and other particulars, commissioned the member for Perthshire to carry his compliments to the steady Jacobite—"that is," said the excellent old King, "not the compliments of the King of England, but those of the Elector of Hanover, and tell him how much I respect him for the steadiness of his principles."

Those who remember such old men, will probably agree that the progress of time, which has withdrawn all of them from the field, has removed, at the same time, a peculiar and striking feature of ancient manners. Their love of past times, their tales of bloody battles fought against romantic odds, were all dear to the imagination, and their idolatry of locks of hair, pictures, rings, ribbons, and other memorials of the time in which they still seemed to live, was an interesting enthusiasm; and al-

though their political principles, had they existed in the relation of fathers, might have rendered them dangerous to the existing dynasty, yet, as we now recollect them, there could not be on the earth supposed to exist persons better qualified to sustain the capacity of innocuous and respectable grand-sires.

It was while reflecting on these things that the novel of Redgauntlet was undertaken. But various circumstances in the composition induced the author to alter its purport considerably, as it passed through his hands, and to carry the action to that point of time when the Chevalier Charles Edward, though fallen into the mere and yellow leaf, was yet meditating a second attempt, which could scarcely have been more hopeless than his first; although one, to which, as we have seen, the unfortunate Prince, at least as late as seventeen hundred and fifty-three, still looked with hope and expectation.

1st April, 1832.

Medgauntlet.

LETTER I.

DARSH LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFORD.

Dumfries.

Cur me exanimas querelis tuis? — In plain English, Why do you deafen me with your croaking! The disconsolate tone in which you bade me farewell at Noble-House, and mounted your miserable hack to return to your law drudgery, still sounds in my ears. It seemed to say, "Happy dog! you can ramble at pleasure over hill and dale, pursue every object of curiosity that presents itself, and relinquish the chase when it loses interest; while I, your senior and your better, must, in this brilliant season, return to my narrow chamber and my musty books."

Such was the import of the reflections with which you saddened our parting bottle of claret, and thus I must needs interpret the terms of your melancholy adieu.

And why should this be so, Alan? Why the deuce should you not be sitting precisely opposite to me at this moment, in the same comfortable George Inn; thy heels on the fender, and thy juridical brow expanding its plications as a pun rose in your fancy! Above all, why, when I fill this very glass of wine, cannot I push the bottle to you, and say, "Fairford, you are chased!" Why, I say, should not all this be, except because Alan Fairford has not the same true sense of friendship as Darsh Latimer, and will not regard our purses as common, as well as our sentiments!

I am alone in the world; my only guardian writes to me of a large fortune, which will be mine when I reach the age of twenty-five complete; my present income is, thou knowest, more than sufficient for all my wants; and yet thou — traitor as thou art to the cause of friendship — dost deprive me of the pleasure of thy society, and submittest, besides, to self-denial on thine own part, rather than my wanderings should cost me a few guineas more! Is this regard for my purse, or for thine own pride? Is it not equally absurd and unreasonable, whichever source it springs from? For myself, I tell thee, I have, and shall have, more than enough for both. This same methodical Samuel Griffiths, of Ironmonger-Lane, Guildhall, London, whose letter arrives as duly as quarter-day, has sent me, as I told thee, double allowance for this my twenty-first birth-day, and an assurance, in his brief fashion, that it will be again doubled for

the succeeding years, until I enter into possession of my own property. Still I am to refrain from visiting England until my twenty-fifth year expires; and it is recommended that I shall forbear all inquiries concerning my family, and so forth, for the present.

Were it not that I recollect my poor mother in her deep widow's weeds, with a countenance that never smiled but when she looked on me — and then, in such wan and woful sort, as the sun when he glances through an April cloud, — were it not, I say, that her mild and matron-like form and countenance forbid such a suspicion, I might think myself the son of some Indian director, or rich citizen, who had more wealth than grace, and a handful of hypocrisy to boot, and who was breeding up privately, and obscurely enriching, one of whose existence he had some reason to be ashamed. But, as I said before, I think on my mother, and am convinced as much as of the existence of my own soul, that no touch of shame could arise from aught in which she was implicated. Meantime, I am wealthy, and I am alone, and why does my friend scruple to share my wealth?

Are you not my only friend? and have you not acquired a right to share my wealth? Answer me that, Alan Fairford. When I was brought from the solitude of my mother's dwelling into the tumult of the Gait's Class at the High School — when I was mocked for my English accent — salted with snow as a Southern — rolled in the gutter for a Saxon popp-pudding, — who with stout arguments, and stouter blows, stood forth my defender? — why, Alan Fairford. Who beat me soundly when I brought the arrogance of an only son, and of course a spoiled urchin, to the forms of the little republic? — why, Alan. And who taught me to smoke a cobbler, put a lozen, head a bicker, and hold the bannets? — Alan, once more. If I became the pride of the Yards, and the dread of the hucksters in the High-School Wynd, it was under thy patronage; and, but for thee, I had been contented with humbly passing through the Cowgate-Port, without climbing over the top of it, and had never seen the *Little sine-stops* nearer than from Barford's Parks. • You taught me to keep my fingers off the weak, and to clench my fist against the strong — to carry no tales out of school — to stand forth like a true man — obey the stern order of a *Pseudo-mum*, and endure my pawmies without winking, like one that is determined not to be the better for

¹ The first stage on the road from Edinburgh to Dumfries via Moffat.

² Break a window, head a whistish with women, and hold the hammer, or headhammer, which used to divide high-schooled boys when playing.

³ See Note A. The *Kittie* and *Stige*.

them. In a word, before I knew thee, I knew nothing.

At College it was the same. * When I was incorrigibly idle, your example and encouragement roused me to mental exertion, and shewed me the way to intellectual enjoyment. You made me an historian, a metaphysician, (*invoca Minerva*)—nay, by Heaven I you had almost made an advocate of me, as well as of yourself. Yes, rather than part with you, Alan, I attended a weary season at the Scotch Law Class; a wearier at the Civil; and with what excellent advantage, my note-book, filled with caricatures of the professors and my fellow-students, is it not yet extant to testify!

"Thus far have I held on with thee untired!"

and, to say truth, purely and solely that I might travel the same road with thee. But it will not do, Alan. By my faith, man, I could as soon think of being one of those ingenious traders who cheat little Master Jackies on the outside of the partition with tops, balls, bats, and rattledores, as a member of the long-robed fraternity within, who impose on grown country gentlemen with bounding brocards of law.† Now, don't you read this to your worthy father, Alan—he loves the well enough, I know, of a Saturday night; but he thinks me but idle company for any other day of the week. And here, I suspect, lies your real objection to taking a ramble with me through the southern counties in this delicious weather. I know the good gentleman has hard thoughts of me for being so unsettled as to leave Edinburgh before the Session rises; perhaps, too, he quarrels a little—I will not say, with my want of ancestry, but with my want of connections. He reckons me a lone thing in this world, Alan, and so, in good truth, I am; and it seems a reason to him why you should not attach yourself to me, that I can claim no interest in the general herd.

Do not suppose I forget what I owe him, for permitting me to shelter for four years under his roof: My obligations to him are not the less, but the greater, if he never heartily loved me. He is angry, too, that I will not, or cannot, be a lawyer, and, with reference to you, considers my disinclination that way as *perniciosa exempli*, as he might say.

But he need not be afraid that a lad of your steadiness will be influenced by such a reed shaken by the winds as I am. You will go on doubting with Dirlston, and resolving those doubts with Stewart,‡ until the grasp speech§ has been spoken more *solito* from the corner of the bench, and with covered head—until you have sworn to defend the liberties and privileges of the College of Justice—until the black gown is hung on your shoulders, and you are free as any of the Faculty to sue or defend. Then will I step forth, Alan, and in a character which even your father will allow may be more useful to you than had I shared this splendid termination of your legal studies. In a word, if I cannot be a counsel, I am determined to be a client, a sort of person without whom a lawsuit would be as dull as a supposed case. Yes, I am

determined to give you your first foe. One can easily, I am assured, get into a lawsuit—it is only the getting out which is sometimes found troublesome;—and, with your kind father for an agent, and you for my counsel learned in the law, and the worshipful Master Samuel Griffiths to back me, a few sessions shall not tire my patience. In short, I will, make my way into Court, even if it should cost me the committing a *delict*, or at least a *quasi delict*.—You see all is not lost of what Erskine wrote, and Wallace taught.

Thus far I have fooled it off well enough; and yet, Alan, all is not at ease within me. I am affected with a sense of loneliness, the more depressing, that it seems to me to be a solitude peculiarly my own. In a country where all the world have a circle of consanguinity, extending to sixth-cousins at least, I am a solitary individual, having only one kind heart to throw in unison with my own. If I were condemned to labour for my bread, I think I should less regard this peculiar species of deprivation. The necessary communication of master and servant would be at least a tie which would attach me to the rest of my kind—as it is, my very independence seems to enhance the peculiarity of my situation. I am in the world as a stranger in the crowded coffeehouse, where he enters, calls for what refreshment he wants, pays his bill, and is forgotten so soon as the waiter's mouth has pronounced his "Thank ye, sir."

I know your good father would term this *staining my mercies*,¶ and ask how I should feel if, instead of being able to throw down my reckoning, I were obliged to deprecate the resentment of the landlord for consuming that which I could not pay for. I cannot tell how it is; but, though this very reasonable reflection comes across me, and though I do confess that four hundred a-year in possession, eight hundred in near prospect, and the I—d knows how many hundreds more in the distance, are very pretty and comfortable things, yet I would freely give one half of them to call your father *father*, though he should scold me for my idleness every hour of the day, and to call you *brother*, though a brother whose merits would throw my own so completely into the shade.

The faint, yet not improbable belief has often come across me, that your father knows something more about my birth and condition than he is willing to communicate; it is so unlikely that I should be left in Edinburgh at six years old, without any other recommendation than the regular payment of my board to old M—— of the High School. Before that time, as I have often told you, I have but a recollection of unbounded indulgence on my mother's part, and the most tyrannical exertion of caprice on my own. I remember still how bitterly she sighed, how vainly she strove to soothe me, while, in the full energy of despotism, I roared like ten bull-calves, for something which it was impossible to procure for me. She is dead, that kind, that ill-rewarded mother! I remember the long faces—the darkened room—the black hangings—the mysterious impression made upon my mind by the hearse and mourning coaches, and the diffi-

1 See Note B. Parliament House.

2 "The solemnity of Dirlston's Doubts and Questions upon the Law, Superiority of Scotland," and, "The Summ Stewart's Dirlston's Doubts and Questions on the Law of Scotland resolved and answered," are works of authority in Scotch Jurisprudence. As is generally the case, the Doubts are sold more in regard than the solution.

3 See Note C. The Grasp speech.

4 A powerful Scottish phraser suggestive of ingratitude for the favours of Providence.

5 Probably Mathews, the predecessor of Dr Adams, to whose memory the author and his contemporaries owe a deep debt of gratitude.

culty which I had to reconcile all this to the disappearance of my mother. I do not think I had before this event formed any idea of death, or that I had even heard of that final consummation of all that lives. The first acquaintance which I formed with it deprived me of my only relation.

A clergyman of venerable appearance, our only visitor, was my guide and companion in a journey of considerable length; and in the charge of another elderly man, substituted in his place, I know not how or why, I completed my journey to Scotland — and this is all I recollect.

I repeat the little history now, as I have a hundred times before, merely because I would wring some sense out of it. Turn, then, thy sharp, wire-drawing, lawyer-like ingenuity to the same task — make up my history as though thou wert shaping the blundering allegations of some blue-bonneted, hard-headed client, into a condensation of facts and circumstances, and thou shalt be, not my Apollo — *quid tibi cum Iyra?* — but my Lord Stair.¹ Meanwhile, I have written myself out of my melancholy and blue devils, merely by prosing about them; so I will now converse half an hour with Roan Robin in his stall — the rascal knows me already, and snickers whenever I cross the threshold of the stable.

The black which you bestrode yesterday morning, promises to be an admirable roadster, and ambled as easily with Sam and the portmanteau, as with you and your load of law-learning. Sam promises to be steady, and has hitherto been so. No long trial, you will say. He lays the blame of former inaccuracies on evil company — the people who were at the livery-stable were too seductive, I suppose — he denies he ever did the horse injustice — would rather have wanted his own dinder, he says. In this I believe him, as Roan Robin's ribs and coat shew no marks of contradiction. However, as he will meet with no saints in the inn we frequent, and as oats are sometimes as speedily converted into ale as John Barleycorn himself, I shall keep a look-out after Master Sam. Stupid fellow! had he not abused my good-nature, I might have chatted to him to keep my tongue in exercise; whereas now, I must keep him at a distance.

Do you remember what Mr Fairford said to me on this subject — it did not become my father's son to speak in that manner to Sam's father's son! I asked you what your father could possibly know of mine; and you answered, "As much, you supposed, as he knew of Sam's — it was a proverbial expression." This did not quite satisfy me, though I am sure I cannot tell why it should not. But I am returning to a fruitless and exhausted subject. Do not be afraid that I shall come back on this well-trodden, pathless field of conjecture. I know nothing too useless, so utterly feeble and contemptible, as the groaning forth one's helpless lamentations into the ears of our friends.

I would fain promise you, that my letters shall be as entertaining as I am determined they shall be regular and well filled. We have an advantage over the dear friends of old, every pair of them. Neither David and Jonathan, nor Orontes and Pylades, nor Damon and Pythias — although, in the latter case particularly, a letter by post would have been very acceptable — ever corresponded

together; for they probably could not write, and certainly had neither post nor franks to speed their effusions to each other; whereas yours, which you had from the old peer, being handled gently, and opened with precaution, may be returned to me again, and serve to make us free of his Majesty's post-office, during the whole time of my proposed tour.² Mercy upon us, Alan! what letters I shall have to send you, with an account of all that I can collect, of pleasant or rare, in this wild-goose jaunt of mine! All I stipulate is that you do not communicate them to the Scots Magazine; for though you used, in a left-handed way, to compliment me on my attainments in the lighter branches of literature, at the expense of my deficiency in the weightier matters of the law, I am not yet audacious enough to enter the portal which the learned Rudiman so kindly opened for the acolytes of the Muses. — *Vale, sis memor mei.* D. L.

P. S. — Direct to the Post-Office here. I shall leave orders to forward your letters wherever I may travel.

LETTER II.

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARSIE LATIMER.

NAGAR, my dear Darsie — you have logic and law enough to understand the word of denial. I deny your conclusion. The premises I admit, namely, that when I mounted on that infernal back, I might utter what seemed a sigh, although I deemed it lost amid the puffs and groans of the broken-winded brute, matchless in the complication of her complaints by any save she, the poor man's mare, renowned in song, that died

"A mile above Dundee."³

But credit me, Darsie, the sigh which escaped me, concerned thee more than myself, and regarded neither the superior mettle of your cavalry, nor your greater command of the means of travelling. I could certainly have cheerfully ridden on with you for a few days; and assure yourself I would not have hesitated to tax your better filled purse for our joint expenses. But you know my father considers every moment taken from the law as a step down hill; and I owe much to his anxiety on my account, although its effects are sometimes troublesome. For example:

I found, on my arrival at the shop in Brown's Square, that the old gentleman had returned that very evening, impatient, it seems, of remaining a night out of the guardianship of the domestic Lares. Having this information from James, whose brow wore rather an anxious look on the occasion, I despatched a Highland chairman to the livery stable with my Buccophalus, and slunk, with as little noise as might be, into my own den, where I began to mumble certain half-digested and not half-digested doctrines of our municipal code. I was not long

¹ See Note D. Letter Fourth.

² Alluding, as our Scots writers, to the numerous signs —

"The post-office was closed,
The post-horn was not heard,
A mile above Dundee."

³ Celebrated as a Scottish lawyer.

seated, when my father's viage was thrust in a peering sort of way, through the half-opened door; and withdrawn, on seeing my occupation, with a half-articulated bump! which seemed to convey a doubt of the seriousness of my application. If it were so, I cannot condemn him; for recollection of these occupied me so entirely during an hour's reading, that although Stair lay before me, and notwithstanding that I turned over three or four pages, the sense of his lordship's clear and perspicuous style so far escaped me, that I had the mortification to find my labour was utterly in vain.

Ere I had brought up my lee-way, James appeared with his summons to our frugal supper—radishes, cheese, and a bottle of the old ale—only two plates though—and no chair set for Mr Darsie, by the attentive James Wilkinson. Said James, with his long face, lank hair, and very long pigtail in its leathern strap, was placed, as usual, at the back of my father's chair, upright as a wooden sentinel at the door of a puppet-show. "You may go down, James," said my father; and exit Wilkinson.—What is to come next I thought I; for the weather is not clear on the paternal brow.

My boots encountered his first glance of displeasure, and he asked me, with a sneer, which way I had been riding. He expected me to answer, "No where," and would then have been at me with his usual sarcasm, touching the humour of walking in shoes at twenty shillings a pair. But I answered with composure, that I had ridden out to dinner as far as Noble-House. He started, (you know his way,) as if I had said that I had dined at Jericho; and as I did not choose to seem to observe his surprise, but continued munching my radishes in tranquillity, he broke forth in ire.

"To Noble-House, sir! and what had you do at Noble-House, sir!—Do you remember you are studying law, sir!—that your Scotch law trials are coming on, sir!—that every moment of your time just now is worth hours at another time!—and have you leisure to go to Noble-House, sir!—and to throw your books behind you for so many hours!—Had it been a turn in the Meadows, or even a game at golf—but Noble-House, sir!"

"I went so far with Darsie Latimer, sir, to see him begin his journey."

"Darsie Latimer!" he replied in a softened tone—"Humph!—Well, I do not blame you for being kind to Darsie Latimer; but it would have done as much good if you had walked with him as far as the toll-bar, and then made your farewells—it would have saved horse-hire—and your reckoning, too, at dinner."

"Latimer said that, sir," I replied, thinking to soften the matter; but I had much better have left it unspoken.

"The reckoning, sir!" replied my father. "And did you sponge upon any man for a reckoning! Sir, no man should enter the door of a public-house without paying his lawing."

"I admit the general rule, sir," I replied; "but this was a passing-off between Darsie and me; and I should conceive it fell under the exception of *Deus ad aduersum*."

"You think yourself a wit," said my father, with as near an approach to a smile as ever he permits to glid the solemnity of his features; "but I reckon you did not eat your dinner standing, like the Jews at their Passover! and it was decided in a case be-

fore the down-bailies of Capar-Angus, when Luckie Simpson's cow had drunk up Luckie Jamieson's brewet of ale, while it stood in the door to cool, that there was no damage to pay, because the crummie drank without sitting down; such being the very circumstance constituting *Deus ad aduersum*, which is a standing drink, for which no reckoning is paid. Ha, sir! what says your advocacy (*seri*) to that! *Exceptio firmat regulam*.—But come, fill your glass, Alan; I am not sorry ye have shewn this attention to Darsie Latimer, who is a good lad, as times go; and having now lived under my roof since he left the school, why, there is really no great matter in coming under this small obligation to him."

As I saw my father's scruples were much softened by the consciousness of his superiority in the legal arguments, I took care to accept my pardon as a matter of grace, rather than of justice; and only replied, we should feel ourselves duller of all evening, now that you were absent. I will give you my father's exact words in reply, Darsie. You know him so well, that they will not offend you; and you are also aware, that there mingles with the good man's preciseness and formality, a fund of absurd observation and practical good sense.

"It is *jury* true," he said; "Darsie was a pleasant companion—but over waggish, over waggish, Alan, and somewhat scatter-brained.—By the way, Wilkinson must get our ale bottled in English phials now, for a quart bottle is too much, night after night, for you and me, without his assistance.—But Darsie, as I was saying, is an arch-lad, and somewhat light in the upper story.—I wish him well through the world; but he has little solidity, Alan, little solidity."

I scorn to desert an absent friend, Darsie, so I said for you a little more than my conscience warranted: but your defection from your legal studies had driven you far to leeward in my father's good opinion.

"Unstable as water, he shall not excel," said my father; "or, as the Septuagint hath it, *diffusa est sicut aqua—non crescit*. He goeth to dancing-houses, and readeth novels—*et cetera*."

I endeavoured to parry these texts by observing, that the dancing-houses amounted only to one night at La Pique's ball—the novels (so far as matter of notoriety, Darsie) to an odd volume of Tom Jones.

"But he danced from night to morning," replied my father, "and he read the idle trash, which the author should have been scourged for, at least twenty times over. It was never out of his hand."

I then hinted, that in all probability your fortune was now so easy as to dispense with your prosecuting the law any farther than you had done; and therefore you might think you had some title to amuse yourself. This was the least palatable argument of all.

"If he cannot amuse himself with the law," said my father, unapphily, "it is the worse for him. If he needs not law to teach him to make a *dispute*, I am sure he needs it to teach him how to keep one; and it would better become him to be learning this, than to be scouring the country like a land-touper, going he knows not where, to see he knows not what, and giving trouble at Noble-House to fools like himself," (an angry glance at your man.) "Noble-House, indeed!" he repeated, with elevated voice and menacing tone, as if there were something offensive to him in the name, though I will venture to

say that any place in which you had been extravagant enough to spend five shillings, would have stood as deep in his reprobation.

Mindful of your idea, that my father knows more of your real situation than he thinks proper to mention, I thought I would hazard a fishing observation. "I did not see," I said, "how the Scottish law would be useful to a young gentleman whose fortune would seem to be vested in England."—I really thought my father would have beat me.

"D'ye mean to come round me, sir, *per ambages*, as Counsellor Pest says? What is it to you where Darsie Latimer's fortune is vested, or whether he hath *any* fortune, ay or no!—And what ill would the Scottish law do to him, though he had as much of it as either Stair or Bankton, sir! Is not the foundation of our municipal law the ancient code of the Roman Empire, devised at a time when it was so much renowned for its civil polity, sir, and wisdom! Go to your bed, sir, after your expedition to Noble-House, and see that your lamp be burning and your book before you ere the sun peeps. *Ars longa, vita brevis*,—were it not a sin to call the divine science of the law by the inferior name of art?"

So my lamp did burn, dear Darsie, the next morning, though the owner took the risk of a domiciliary visitation, and lay snug in bed, trusting its glimmer might, without farther inquiry, be received as sufficient evidence of his vigilance. And now, upon this the third morning after your departure, things are but little better; for though the lamp burns in my den, and Voet on the Pandects hath his wisdom spread open before me, yet as I only use him as a reading-desk on which to scribble this sheet of nonsense to Darsie Latimer, it is probable the vicinity will be of little furtherance to my studies.

And now, methinks, I hear thee call me an affected hypocritical varlet, who, living under such a system of distrust and restraint as my father chooses to govern by, nevertheless pretends not to envy you your freedom and independence.

Latimer, I will tell you no lies. I wish my father would allow me a little more exercise of my free will, were it but that I might feel the pleasure of doing what would please him of my own accord. A little more spare time, and a little more money to enjoy it, would, besides, neither misbecome my age nor my condition; and it is, I own, provoking to see so many in the same situation winging the air at freedom, while I sit here, caged up like a cobbler's linnet, to chant the same unvaried lesson from sunrise to sunset, not to mention the listening to so many lectures against idleness, as if I enjoyed or was making use of the means of amusement! But then I cannot at heart blame either the motive or the object of this severity. For the motive, it is and can only be my father's anxious, devoted, and unrequiting affection and zeal for my improvement, with a laudable sense of the honour of the profession to which he has trained me.

As we have no near relations, the tie betwixt us is of even unusual closeness, though, in itself one of the strongest which nature can form. I am, and have all along been, the exclusive object of my father's anxious hopes, and his still more anxious and engrossing fears; so what title have I to complain, although now and then these fears and hopes lead him to take a troublesome and incessant charge

of all my motions! Besides, I ought to recollect, and, Darsie, I do recollect, that my father upon various occasions, has shown that he can be indulgent as well as strict. The leaving his old apartments in the Luckenbooths was to him like divorcing the soul from the body; yet, Dr R—— did but hint that the better air of this new district was more favourable to my health, as I was then suffering under the penalties of too rapid a growth, when he exchanged his old and beloved quarters, adjacent to the very Heart of Mid-Lothian, for one of those new tenements [entire within themselves] which modern taste has so lately introduced. Instance also the inestimable favour which he conferred on me by receiving you into his house, when you had only the unpleasant alternative of remaining, though a grown-up lad, in the society of mere boys! This was a thing so contrary to all my father's ideas of seclusion, of economy, and of the safety to my morals and industry, which he wished to attain, by preserving me from the society of other young people, that, upon my word, I am always rather astonished how I should have had the impudence to make the request, than that he should have complied with it.

Then for the object of his solicitude—Do not laugh, or hold up your hands, my good Darsie; but upon my word I like the profession to which I am in the course of being educated, and am serious in prosecuting the preliminary studies. The law is my vocation—in an especial, and, I may say, in an hereditary way, my vocation; for although I have not the honour to belong to any of the great families who form in Scotland, as in France, the noblesse of the robe, and with us, at least, carry their heads as high, or rather higher, than the noblesse of the sword,—for the former consist more frequently of the "first born of Egypt,"—yet my grandfather, who, I dare say, was a most excellent person, had the honour to sign a bitter protest against the Union, in the respectable character of town-clerk to the ancient Borough of Birlincheroat; and there is some reason—shall I say to hope, or to suspect!—that he may have been a natural son of a first cousin of the then Fairford of that ilk, who had been long numbered among the minor barons. Now my father mounted a step higher on the ladder of legal promotion, being, as you know as well as I do, an eminent and respected Writer to his Majesty's Signet; and I myself am destined to mount a round higher still, and wear the honoured robe which is sometimes assumed, like Charity, to cover a multitude of sins. I have, therefore, no choice but to climb upwards, since we have mounted thus high, or else to fall down at the imminent risk of my neck. So that I reconcile myself to my destiny; and while you are looking from mountain peaks, at distant lakes and friths, I am, *de episcopis jure*, consoling myself with visions of crimson and scarlet gowns—with the appendages of handsome cows, well lined with salary.

You smile, Darsie, more too, and seem to say it is little worth while to dress one's self with such vulgar dreams; yours being, on the contrary, of a high and heroic character, bearing the same resemblance to mine, that a bench, covered with purple cloth, and plentifully loaded with station papers, does to some Gothic throne, rich with barbaric pearls and gold. But what would you have?—See

quemque trahit voluptas. And my visions of pre-ferment, though they may be as unsubstantial as present, are nevertheless more capable of being realized, than your aspirations after the Lord knows what. What says my father's proverb? "Look to a gown of gold, and you will at least get a sleeve of it." Such is my pursuit; but what dost thou look to? The chance that the mystery, as you call it, which at present overlounds your birth and connections, will clear up into something inexpressible and inconceivably brilliant; and this without any effort or exertion of your own, but purely by the good-will of Fortune. I know the pride and naughtiness of thy heart, and sincerely do I wish that thou hadst more beatings to thank me for, than those which thou dost acknowledge so gratefully. Then had I thumped these Quixotical expectations out of thee, and thou hadst not, as now, conceived thyself to be the hero of some romantic history, and converted, in thy vain imaginations, honest Griffiths, citizen and broker, who never bestows more than the needful upon his quarterly epistles, into some wise Alexander or sage Alquife, the mystical and magical protector of thy peerless destiny. But I know not how it was, thy skull got harder, I think, and my knuckles became softer; not to mention that at length thou didst begin to shew about thee a spark of something dangerous, which I was bound to respect at least, if I did not fear it.

And while I speak of this it is not much amiss to advise thee to correct a little this cock-a-hoop courage of thine. I fear much that, like a hot-mottled horse, it will carry the owner into some scrape, out of which he will find it difficult to extricate himself, especially if the daring spirit which bore thee thither should chance to fail thee at a pinch. Remember, Darsie, thou art not naturally courageous; on the contrary, we have long since agreed, that, quiet as I am, I have the advantage in this important particular. My courage consists, I think, in strength of nerves and constitutional indifference to danger; which, though it never pushes me on adventure, secures me in full use of my recollection, and tolerably complete self-possession, when danger actually arrives. Now, thine seems more what may be called intellectual courage; highness of spirit, and desire of distinction; impulses which render thee alive to the love of fame, and deaf to the apprehension of danger, until it forces itself suddenly upon thee. I own, that whether it is from my having caught up my father's apprehensions, or that I have reason to entertain doubts of my own, I often think that this wildfire chase, of romantic situation and adventure, may lead thee into some mischief; and then what would become of Alan Fairford? They might make whom they pleased Lord-Advocate or Solicitor-General, I should never have the heart to strive for it. All my exertions are intended to vindicate myself one day in your eyes; and I think I should not care a farthing for the embroidered silk gowns, more than for an old woman's apron, unless I had hopes that thou shouldst be walking the boards to admire, and perhaps to envy me.

That this may be the case, I perceive — beware! See not a Dalenice in every stippled girl, who, with blue eyes, fair hair, a latticed plaid, and a willow-wand in her girdle, drives out the village cows to the lea-ning. Do not think you will meet a gallant Valentine in every English rider, or an Or-

don to every Highland drover. View things as they are, and not as they may be magnified through thy seeming fancy. I have seen thee look at an old gravel pit, till thou madest out capes, and bays, and inlets, crags and precipices, and the whole stupendous scenery of the Isle of Perce, in what was, to all ordinary eyes, a mere horse-pond. Besides, did I not once find thee gazing with respect at a lizard, in the attitude of one who looks upon a crocodile? Now this is, doubtless, so far a harmless exercise of your imagination, for the puddle cannot drown you, nor the Lilliputian alligator eat you up. But it is different in society, where you cannot mistake the character of those you converse with, or suffer your fancy to exaggerate their qualities, good or bad, without exposing yourself not only to ridicule, but to great and serious inconveniences. Keep guard, therefore, on your imagination, my dear Darsie; and let your old friend assure you, it is the point of your character most pregnant with peril to its good and generous owner. Adieu! let the franks of the worthy peer remain unemployed; above all, *Sis memor mei.* A. F.

LETTER III.

DARSIE LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFORD.

Shepherd's Bush.

I HAVE received thine absurd and most conceited epistle. It is well for thee that, Lovelace and Bel-ford-like, we came under a convulsion to pardon every species of liberty which we may take with each other; since, upon my word, there are some reflections in your last, which would otherwise have obliged me to return, forthwith to Edinburgh, merely to shew you I was not what you took me for.

Why, what a pair of prigs hast thou made of us! — I plunging into scrapes, without having courage to get out of them — thy sagacious self, afraid to put one foot before the other, lest it should run away from its companion; and so standing still like a post, out of mere faintness and coldness of heart, while all the world were driving full speed past thee. Thou a portrait-painter! — I tell thee, Alan, I have seen a better seated on the fourth round of a ladder, and painting a bare-breeched Highlander, holding a pint-stoup as big as himself, and a booted Low-lander, in a bobwig, supporting a glass of like dimensions; the whole being designed to represent the sign of the Salvation.

How hadst thou the heart to represent thine own individual self, with all thy motions, like those of a great Dutch doll, depending on the pressure of certain springs, as duty, reflection, and the like; without the impulse of which, thou wouldst doubtless have me believe thou wouldst not budge an inch! But have I not seen Gravity out of his bed at midnight? and must I, in plain terms, remind thee of certain mad pranks? Thou hadst ever, with the gravest sentiments in thy mouth, and the most starched reserve in thy manner, a kind of lumbering proclivity towards mischief, although with more inclination to set it a-going, than address to carry it through; and I cannot but chuckle internally, when I think of having seen my most venerable minister, the future President of some high Scottish Court, puffing, blowing, and floundering, like a

clumsy cart-horse in a bog, where his efforts to extricate himself only plunged him deeper at every awkward struggle, till some one—I myself, for example—took compassion on the moaning monster, and dragged him out by main and tail.

As for me, my portrait is, if possible, even more scandalously caricatured. I fall or quail in spirit at the upmost! Where canst thou show me the least symptom of the recreant temper with which thou hast invested me, (as I trust,) merely to set off the solid and impassible dignity of thine own stupid indifference! If you ever saw me tremble, be assured that my flesh, like that of the old Spanish general, only quaked at the dangers into which my spirit was about to lead it. Seriously, Alan, this imputed poverty of spirit is a shabby charge to bring against your friend. I have examined myself as closely as I can, being, in very truth, a little hurt at your having such hard thoughts of me, and on my life I can see no reason for them. I allow you have, perhaps, some advantage of me in the steadiness and indifference of your temper; but I should despise myself, if I were conscious of the deficiency in courage which you seem willing enough to impute to me. However, I suppose this ungracious hint proceeds from sincere anxiety for my safety; and so viewing it, I swallow it as I would do medicine from a friendly doctor, although I believed in my heart he had mistaken my complaint.

This offensive insinuation disposed of, I thank thee, Alan, for the rest of thy epistle. I thought I heard your good father pronouncing the word Noble-House, with a mixture of contempt and displeasure, as if the very name of the poor little hamlet were odious to him, or, as if you had selected, out of all Scotland, the very place at which you had no call to dine. But if he had had any particular aversion to that blameless village, and very sorry inn, is it not his own fault that I did not accept the invitation of the Laird of Glengallacher, to shoot a buck in what he emphatically calls "his country?" Truth is, I had a strong desire to have complied with his Lairdship's invitation. To shoot a buck! Think how magnificent an idea to one who never shot any thing but hedge-sparrows, and that with a horse-pistol, purchased at a broker's stand in the Cowgate!—You, who stand upon your courage, may remember that I took the risk of firing the said pistol for the first time, while you stood at twenty yards' distance; and that, when you were persuaded it would go off without bursting, forgetting all law but that of the biggest and strongest, you possessed yourself of it exclusively for the rest of the holy-days. Such a day's sport was no complete introduction to the noble art of deer-stalking, as it is practised in the Highlands; but I should not have scrupled to accept of honest Glengallacher's invitation, at the risk of firing a rifle for the first time, had it not been for the outcry which your father made at my proposal, in the full ardour of his zeal for King George, the Hanover succession, and the Presbyterian faith. I wish I had stood out, since I have gained a little upon his good opinion by submission. All his impressions concerning the Highlanders are taken from the recollections of the Forty-five, when he retreated from the West-Port with his brother volunteers, such to the fortunes of his own superstitious dwelling, so soon as they heard the Adventurer was arrived with his clans as near them as Kirkcaldy. The Night of Falkirk—parvus nan bene scietis—

in which I think your sire had his share with the undaunted western regiment, does not seem to have improved his taste for the company of the Highlanders; (quæst. Alan, dost thou derive the courage thou meatest such beast of from an hereditary source?)—and stories of Rob Roy Macgregor, and Sergeant Alan M'har Cameron, have served to paint them in still more sable colours to his imagination.

Now, from all I can understand, these ideas, as applied to the present state of the country, are absolutely chimerical. The Pretender is no more remembered in the Highlands, than if the poor gentlemen were gathered to his hundred and eight fathers, whose portraits adorn the ancient walls of Holyrood; the broadsword has passed into other hands; the targets are used to cover the butter churns; and the race has sunk, or is fast sinking, from ruffling byllies into tame cheaters. Indeed, it was partly my conviction that there is little to be seen in the north, which, arriving at your father's conclusions, though from different premises, inclined my course in this direction, where perhaps I shall see as little.

One thing, however, I have seen; and it was with pleasure the more indelible, that I was debarred from treading the land which my eyes were permitted to gaze upon, like those of the dying prophet from the top of Mount Pisgah,—I have seen, in a word, the fruitful shores of merry England; merry England! of which I boast myself a native, and on which I gaze, even while raging floods and unstable quicksands divide us, with the filial affection of a dutiful son.

Thou canst not have forgotten, Alan—for when didst thou ever forget what was interesting to thy friend!—that the same letter from my friend Griffiths, which debited my income, and placed my motions at my own free disposal, contained a prohibitory clause, by which, reason none assigned, I was prohibited, as I respected my present anxiety and future fortune, from visiting England; every other part of the British dominions, and a tour, if I pleased, on the Continent, being left to my own choice.—Where is the tale, Alan, of a covered dish in the midst of a royal banquet, upon which the eyes of every guest were immediately fixed, neglecting all the dainties with which the table was loaded! This cause of banishment from England—from my native country—from the land of the brave, and the wise, and the free—afflicts me more than I am rejoiced by the freedom and independence assigned to me in all other respects. Thus, in seeking this extreme boundary of the country which I am forbidden to tread, I resemble the poor tethered horse, which, you may have observed, is always rearing on the very verge of the circle to which it is limited by its halter.

Do not accuse me of romance for obeying this impulse towards the South; nor suppose that, to satisfy the imaginary longing of an idle curiosity, I am in any danger of risking the solid comforts of my present condition. Whaton has hitherto taken charge of my motions, has shown me, by convincing proofs, more weighty than the assurances which I have withheld, that my real advantage is there.

1 Of Rob Roy Macgregor, and the story of his adventures, commonly called the Rob Roy's story, a writer of the same kind, was equally mistaken in his strength, courage, and generosity.

principal object. I should be, therefore, worse than a fool did I object to their authority, even when it seems somewhat capriciously exercised; for assuredly, at my age, I might—intrusted as I am with the care and management of myself in every other particular—expect that the cause of excluding me from England should be frankly and fairly stated for my own consideration and guidance. However, I will not grumble about the matter. I shall know the whole story one day, I suppose; and perhaps, as you sometimes surmise, I shall not find there is any mighty matter in it after all.

Yet one cannot help wondering—but plague on it, if I wonder any longer, my letter will be as full of wonders as one of Katterfelto's advertisements. I have a month's mind, instead of this damnable iteration of guesses and forebodings, to give thee the history of a little adventure which befell me yesterday; though I am sure you will, as usual, turn the opposite side of the spy-glasses on my poor narrative, and reduce *more* too, to the most petty trivialities, the circumstance to which thou accusest me of giving undue consequence. Mang thee, Alan, thou art as unfit a confidant for a youthful gallant with some spice of imagination, as the old taciturn secretary of Facardin of Trebizond. Nevertheless, we must each perform our separate destinies. I am doomed to see, act, and tell;—thou, like a Dutchman, enclosed in the same diligence with a Gascon, to hear, and shrug thy shoulders.

Of Dumfries, the capital town of this county, I have but little to say, and will not abuse your patience by reminding you, that it is built on the gallant river Nith, and that its churchyard, the highest place of the whole town, commands an extensive and fine prospect. Neither will I take the traveller's privilege of inflicting upon you the whole history of Bruce poniarding the Med Comyn in the Church of the Dominicans at this place, and becoming a king and patriot, because he had been a church-breaker and a murderer. The present Dumfriessers remember and justify the deed, observing it was only a papist church—in evidence whereof, its walls have been so completely dismantled, that no vestiges of them remain. They are a sturdy set of true-blue Presbyterians, these burghers of Dumfries; men after your father's own heart, zealous for the Protestant succession—the rather that many of the great families around are suspected to be of a different way of thinking, and shared, a great many of them, in the insurrection of the Fifteen, and some of the more recent business of the Forty-five. The town itself suffered in the latter era; for Lord Elcho, with a large party of the rebels, levied a severe contribution upon Dumfries, on account of the citizens having annoyed the rear of the Chevalier during his march into England.

Many of these particulars I learned from Provoost C—, who, happening to see me in the market-place, remembered that I was an intimate of your father's, and very kindly asked me to dinner. May tell your father that the effects of his kindness to me follow me every where. I became tired, however, of this pretty town in the course of twenty-four hours, and crept along the coast eastwards, amusing myself with looking out for objects of antiquity, and sometimes making, or attempting to make, use of my new angling-rod. By the way,

old Cotton's instructions, by which I hoped to qualify myself for one of the gentle society of anglers, are not worth a farthing for this meridian. I learned this by mere accident, after I had waited four mortal hours. I shall never forget an impudent ueghin, a cow-herd, about twelve years old, without either brogue or bonnet, barelegged, and with a very indifferent pair of breeches—how the villain grinned in scorn at my landing-net, my plummet, and the gorgeous jury of flies which I had assembled to destroy all the fish in the river. I was induced at last to lend the rod to the sneering scoundrel, to see what he would make of it; and he had not only half filled my basket in an hour, but literally taught me to kill two trouts with my own hand. This, and Sam having found the hay and oats, not forgetting the ale, very good at this small inn, first made me take the fancy of resting here for a day or two; and I have got my grinning blackguard of a Piscator leave to attend to me, by paying sixpence a-day for a herdbooy in his stead.

A notably clean Englishwoman keeps this small house, and my bedroom is sweetened with lavender, has a clean sash-window, and the walls are, moreover, adorned with ballads of Fair Rosamond and Cruel Barbara Allan. The woman's accent, though uncouth enough, sounds yet kindly in my ear; for I have never yet forgotten the desolate effect produced on my infant organs, when I heard on all sides your slow and broad northern pronunciation, which was to me the tone of a foreign land. I am sensible I myself have since that time acquired Scotch in perfection, and many a Scottishism withal. Still the sound of the English accentuation comes to my ears as the tones of a friend; and even when heard from the mouth of some wandering beggar, it has seldom failed to charm forth my mite. You Scotch, who are so proud of your own nationality, must make due allowance for that of old *er*-folks.

On the next morning I was about to set forth to the stream where I had commenced angler the night before, but was prevented, by a heavy shower of rain, from stirring abroad the whole forenoon; during all which time, I heard my varlet of a guide as loud with his blackguard jokes in the kitchen, as a footman in the shilling gallery;—so little are modesty and innocence the inseparable companions of rusticity and seclusion.

When after dinner the day cleared, and we at length sallied out to the river side, I found myself subjected to a new trick on the part of my accomplished preceptor. Apparently, he liked fishing himself better than the trouble of instructing an awkward novice, such as I; and in hopes of exhausting my patience, and inducing me to resign the rod, as I had done the preceding day, my friend contrived to keep me thrashing the water more than an hour with a pointless hook. I despised this trick at first, by observing the rogue grinning with delight when he saw a large trout rise and dash harmless away from the angle. I gave him a sound cuff, Alan; but the next moment was sorry, and, to make amends, yielded possession of the fishing-rod for the rest of the evening, he undertaking to bring me home a dish of trouts for my supper, in atonement for his offence.

Having thus got honourably rid of the trouble of amusing myself in a way I cared not for, I turned my steps towards the sea, or rather the Solway Firth, which here separates the two sister kingdoms.

and which lay at about a mile's distance, by pleasant walk over sandy knolls, covered with short herbage, which you call Links, and we English, Downs.

But the rest of my adventure would weary out my fingers, and must be deferred until to-morrow, when you shall hear from me, by way of continuation; and, in the meanwhile, to prevent over-hasty conclusions, I must just hint to you, we are but yet on the verge of the adventure which it is my purpose to communicate.

LETTER IV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Shepherd's Bush.

I MENTIONED in my last, that having abandoned my fishing-rod as an unprofitable implement, I crossed over the open downs which divided me from the margin of the Solway. When I reached the banks of the great estuary, which are here very bare and exposed, the waters had receded from the large and level space of sand, through which a stream, now feeble and fordable, found its way to the ocean. The whole was illuminated by the beams of the low and setting sun, who shewed his ruddy front, like a warrior prepared for defence, over a huge battlemented and turreted wall of crimson and black clouds, which appeared like an immense Gothic fortress, into which the Lord of day was descending. His setting rays glimmered bright upon the wet surface of the sands, and the numberless pools of water by which it was covered, where the inequality of the ground had occasioned their being left by the tide.

The scene was animated by the exertions of a number of horsemen, who were actually employed in hunting salmon. Ay, Alan, lift up your hands and eyes as you will, I can give their mode of fishing no name so appropriate; for they chased the fish at full gallop, and struck them with their barbed spears, as you see hunters spearing boats in the old tapestry. The salmon, to be sure, take the thing more quietly than the boars; but they are so swift in their own element, that to pursue and strike them is the task of a good horseman, with a quick eye, a determined hand, and full command both of his horse and weapon. The shouts of the fellows as they galloped up and down in the animating exercise—their loud bursts of laughter when any of their number caught a fish—and still louder acclamations when any of the party made a capital stroke with his lance—gave so much animation to the whole scene, that I caught the enthusiasm of the sport, and ventured forward a considerable space on the sands. The feats of one horseman, in particular, called forth so repeatedly the clamorous applause of his companions, that the very banks rang again with their shouts. He was a tall man, well mounted on a strong black horse, which he caused to turn and wind like a bird in the air, carried a longer spear than the others, and wore a sort of fur cap or bonnet, with a short feather in it, which gave him on the whole rather a superior appearance to the other fishermen. He seemed to hold some sort of authority among them, and occasionally directed their motions both by voice and

hand; at which times I thought his gestures were striking, and his voice uncommonly sonorous and commanding.

The riders began to make for the shore, and the interest of the scene was almost over, while I lingered on the sands, with my looks turned to the shores of England, still gilded by the sun's last rays, and, as it seemed, scarce distant a mile from me. The anxious thoughts which haunt me began to muster in my bosom, and my feet slowly and insensibly approached the river which divided me from the forbidden precincts, though without any formed intention, when my steps were arrested by the sound of a horse galloping; and as I turned, the rider (the same fisherman whom I had formerly distinguished) called out to me, in an abrupt manner, "Soho, brother! you are too late for Bowness to-night—the tide will make presently."

I turned my head and looked at him without answering; for, to my thinking, his sudden appearance (or rather, I should say, his unexpected approach) had, amidst the gathering shadows and lingering light, something in it which was wild and ominous.

"Are you deaf?" he added—"or are you mad?—or have you a mind for the next world?"

"I am a stranger," I answered, "and had no other purpose than looking on at the fishing—I am about to return to the side I came from."

"Best make haste then," said he. "Ho that dreams on the bed of the Solway, may wake in the next world. The sky threatens a blast that will briff in the waves three feet a-breast."

So saying he turned his horse and rode off, while I began to walk back towards the Scottish shore, a little alarmed at what I had heard; for the tide advances with such rapidity upon these fatal sands, that well-mounted horsemen lay aside hopes of safety, if they see its white surge advancing while they are yet at a distance from the bank.

These recollections grew more agitating, and, instead of walking deliberately, I began a race as fast as I could, feeling, or thinking I felt, each pool of salt water through which I splashed, grow deeper and deeper. At length the surface of the sand did seem considerably more intersected with pools and channels full of water—either that the tide was really beginning to influence the bed of the estuary, or, as I must own is equally probable, that I had, in the hurry and confusion of my retreat, involved myself in difficulties which I had avoided in my more deliberate advance. Either way, it was rather an unpromising state of affairs, for the sands at the same time became softer, and my footsteps, so soon as I had passed, were instantly filled with water. I began to have odd recollections concerning the snugness of your father's parlour, and the secure footing afforded by the pavement of Brown's Square and Scot's Close, when my better genius, the tall fisherman, appeared once more close to my side, he and his sable horse looming gigantic in the now darkening twilight.

"Are you mad?" he said in the same deep tone which had before thrilled on my ear, "or are you weary of your life?—You will be presently amongst the quicksands."—I professed my ignorance of the way, to which he only replied, "There is no time for prating—get up behind me."

He probably expected me to spring from the ground with the activity which these Borderers

have, by constant practice, acquired in every thing relating to horsemanship; but as I stood irresolute, he extended his hand, and grasping mine, bid me place my foot on the toe of his boot, and thus raised me in a trice to the croupe of his horse. I was scarcely securely seated, ere he shook the reins of his horse, who instantly sprang forward; but annoyed, doubtless, by the unusual burden, treated us to two or three bounds, accompanied by as many flourishes of his hind heels. The rider sat like a tower, notwithstanding that the unexpected plunging of the animal threw me forward upon him. The horse was soon compelled to submit to the discipline of the spur and bridle, and went off at a steady hand gallop; thus shortening the devious, for it was by no means a direct path, by which the rider, avoiding the loose quicksands, made for the northern bank.

My friend, perhaps I may call him my preserver, — for to a stranger, my situation was fraught with real danger, — continued to press on at the same speedy pace, but in perfect silence, and I was under too much anxiety of mind to disturb him with any questions. At length we arrived at a part of the shore with which I was utterly unacquainted, when I alighted and began to return, in the best fashion I could, my thanks for the important service which he had just rendered me.

The stranger only replied by an impatient "pshaw!" and was about to ride off, and leave me to my own resources, when I implored him to complete his work of kindness, by directing me to Shepherd's Bush, which was, as I informed him, my home for the present.

"To Shepherd's Bush!" he said; "it is but three miles, but if you know not the land better than the sand, you may break your neck before you get there; for it is no road for a moping boy in a dark night; and, besides, there are the brook and the fens to cross."

I was a little dismayed at this communication of such difficulties as my habits had not called on me to contend with. Once more the idea of thy father's fire-side came across me; and I could have been well contented to have avowed the ruinance of my situation, together with the glorious independence of control, which I possessed at the moment, for the comforts of the chimney-corner, though I were obliged to keep my eyes chained to Erskine's Larger Institutes.

I asked my new friend whether he could not direct me to any house of public entertainment for the night; and supposing it probable he was himself a poor man, I added with the conscious dignity of a well-filled pocketbook, that I could make it worth any man's while to oblige me. The fisherman making no answer, I turned away from him with as gallant an appearance of indifference as I could command, and began to take, as I thought, the path which he had pointed out to me.

His deep voice immediately sounded after me to recall me. "Stay, young man, stay — you have mistaken the road already. — I wonder your friends sent out such an inconsiderate youth, without some one wiser than himself to take care of him."

"Perhaps they might not have done so," said I, "if I had any friends who cared about the matter."

"Well, sir," he said, "it is not my custom to open my house to strangers, but your pink is like to be a smart one; for, besides the risk from bad roads,

York and broken ground, and the night, which looks both black and gloomy, there is bad company on the road sometimes — at least it has a bad name, and some have come to harm; so that I think I must for once make my rule give way to your necessity, and give you a night's lodging in my cottage."

Why was it, Alan, that I could not help giving an involuntary shudder at receiving an invitation so reasonable in itself, and so suitable to my naturally inquisitive disposition? I easily suppressed this untimely sensation; and as I returned thanks, and expressed my hope that I should not disarrange his family, I once more dropped a hint of my desire to make compensation for any trouble I might occasion. The man answered very coldly, "Your presence will no doubt give me trouble, sir, but it is of a kind which your purse cannot compensate; in a word, although I am content to receive you as my guest, I am no publican to call a reckoning."

I begged his pardon, and, at his instance, once more seated myself behind him upon the good horse, which went forth steady as before — the moon, whenever she could penetrate the clouds, throwing the huge shadow of the animal, with its double burden, on the wild and bare ground over which we passed.

Thou mayst laugh till thou loatest the letter fall if thou wilt, but it reminded me of the Magician Atlantes on his hippogriff, with a knight trussed up behind him, in the manner Ariosto has depicted that matter. Thou art, I know, matter-of-fact enough to affect contempt of that fascinating and delicious poem; but think not that, to conform with thy bad taste, I shall forbear any suitable illustration which now or hereafter may occur to me.

On we went, the sky blackening around us, and the wind beginning to pipe such a wild and melancholy tune as best suited the hollow sounds of the advancing tide, which I could hear at a distance, like the roar of some immense monster defrauded of its prey.

At length, our course was crossed by a deep dell or dingle, such as they call in some parts of Scotland a den, and in others a clench, or narrow glen. It seemed, by the broken glances which the moon continued to throw upon it, to be steep, precipitous, and full of trees, which are, generally speaking, rather scarce upon these shores. The descent by which we plunged into this dell was both steep and rugged, with two or three abrupt turnings; but neither danger nor darkness impeded the motion of the black horse, who seemed rather to slide upon his haunches, than to gallop down the pass, throwing me again on the shoulders of the athletic rider who, sustaining no inconvenience by the circumstance, continued to press the horse forward with his heel, steadily supporting him at the same time by raising his bridle hand, until we stood in safety at the bottom of the steep — not a little to my consolation, as, friend Alan, thou mayst easily conceive.

A very short advance up the glen, the bottom of which we had attained by this ugly descent, brought us in front of two or three cottages, one of which another blink of moonshine enabled me to rate as rather better than those of the Scottish peasantry in this part of the world; for the windows seemed glazed, and there were what are called storm-windows in the roof, giving symptoms of the magnificence of a second story. The scene around was

very interesting; for the cottages, and the *verds* or crofts annexed to them, occupied a *haugh*, or holm, of two acres, which a brook of some consequence (to judge from its roar) had left upon one side of the little glen while finding its course close to the farther bank, and which appeared to be covered and darkened with trees, while the level space beneath enjoyed such stormy smiles as the moon had that night to bestow.

I had little time for observation, for my companion's loud whistle, seconded by an equally loud hallow, speedily brought to the door of the principal cottage a man and a woman, together with two large Newfoundland dogs, the deep baying of which I had for some time heard. A yelping terrier or two, which had joined the concert, were silent at the presence of my conductor, and began to whine, jump up, and fawn upon him. The female drew back when she beheld a stranger; the man, who had a lighted lantern, advanced, and without any observation, received the horse from my host, and led him, doubtless, to stable, while I followed my conductor into the house. When we had passed the *hallan*,¹ we entered a well-sized apartment, with a clean brick floor, where a fire blazed (much to my contentment) in the ordinary projecting sort of a chimney, common in Scottish houses. There were stone seats within the chimney; and ordinary utensils, mixed with fishing-spears, nets, and similar implements of sport, were hung around the walls of the place. The female who had first appeared at the door, had now retreated into a side apartment. She was presently followed by my guide, after he had silently motioned me to a seat; and their place was supplied by an elderly woman, in a gray stuff gown, with a check apron and *toy*, obviously a menial, though neater in her dress than is usual in her apparent rank—an advantage which was counterbalanced by a very forbidding aspect. But the most singular part of her attire, in this very Protestant country, was a rosary, in which the smaller beads were black oak, and those indicating the *pater-noster* of silver, with a crucifix of the same metal.

This person made preparations for supper, by spreading a clean though coarse cloth over a large wooden table, placing trenchers and salt upon it, and arranging the fire to receive a gridiron. I observed her motions in silence; for she took no sort of notice of me, and as her looks were singularly forbidding, I felt no disposition to commence conversation.

When this duenna had made all preliminary arrangements, she took from the well-filled pouch of my conductor, which he had hung up by the door, one or two salmon, or *grilse*, as the smaller sort are termed, and selecting that which seemed best, and in highest season, began to cut it into slices, and to prepare a *grillade*; the savoury smell of which affected me so powerfully, that I began sincerely to hope that no delay would intervene between the platter and the lip.

As this thought came across me, the man who had conducted the horse to the stable entered the apartment, and discovered to me a countenance yet more uninviting than that of the old crone who was performing with such dexterity the office of cook to the party. He was perhaps sixty years old; yet

his brow was not much furrowed, and his jet black hair was only grizzled, not whitened, by the advance of age. All his motions spoke strength unabated; and, though rather undersized, he had very broad shoulders, was square-made, thin-flanked, and apparently combined in his frame muscular strength and activity; the last somewhat impaired perhaps by years, but the first remaining in full vigour. A hard and harsh countenance—eyes far sunk under projecting eyebrows, which were grizzled like his hair—a wide mouth, furnished from ear to ear with a range of unimpaired teeth, of uncommon whiteness, and a size and breadth which might have become the jaws of an ogre, completed this delightful portrait. He was clad like a fisherman, in jacket and trowsers of the blue cloth commonly used by seamen, and had a Dutch case-knife, like that of a Hamburg skipper, stuck into a broad buff belt, which seemed as if it might occasionally sustain weapons of a description still less equivocally calculated for violence.

This man gave me an inquisitive, and, as I thought, a sinister look upon entering the apartment; but without any farther notice of me, took up the office of arranging the table, which the old lady had abandoned for that of cooking the fish, and with more address than I expected from a person of his coarse appearance, placed two chairs at the head of the table, and two stools below; accommodating each seat to a cover, beside which he placed an allowance of barley-bread, and a small jug, which he replenished with ale from a large black jack. Thirteen of these jugs were of ordinary earthenware, but the fourth, which he placed by the right-hand cover at the upper end of the table, was a flagon of silver, and displayed armorial bearings. Beside this flagon he placed a salt-cellar of silver, hand somely wrought, containing salt of exquisite whiteness, with pepper and other spices. A sliced lemon was also presented on a small silver salver. The two large water-dogs, who seemed perfectly to understand the nature of the preparations, seated themselves one on each side of the table, to be ready to receive their portion of the entertainment. I never saw finer animals, or which seemed to be more influenced by a sense of decorum, excepting that they slobbered a little as the rich scent from the chimney was wafted past their noses. The small dogs ensconced themselves beneath the table.

I am aware that I am dwelling upon trivial and ordinary circumstances, and that perhaps I may weary out your patience in doing so. But conceive me alone in this strange place, which seemed, from the universal silence, to be the very temple of Harpocrates—remember that this is my first excursion from home—forget not that the manner in which I had been brought hither had the dignity of danger and something the air of an adventure, and that there was a mysterious incongruity in all I had hitherto witnessed; and you will not, I think, be surprised that these circumstances, though trifling, should force themselves on my notice at the time, and dwell in my memory afterwards.

That a fisher, who pursued the sport perhaps for his amusement as well as profit, should be well mounted and better lodged than the lower class of peasantry, had in it nothing surprising; but there was something about all that I saw which seemed to intimate, that I was rather in the abode of a decayed gentleman, who clung to a few of the forces

¹ The partition which divides a Scottish cottage.

and observances of former rank, than in that of a common peasant, raised above his fellows by comparative opulence.

Besides the articles of plate which I have already noticed, the old man now lighted and placed on the table a silver lamp, or *crucie*, as the Scottish term it, filled with very pure oil, which in burning diffused an aromatic fragrance, and gave me a more perfect view of the cottage walls, which I had hitherto only seen dimly by the light of the fire. The *biak*,¹ with its usual arrangement of pewter and earthenware, which was most strictly and critically clean, glanced back the flame of the lamp merrily from one side of the apartment. In a recess, formed by the small bow of a latticed window, was a large writing-desk of walnut-tree wood, curiously carved, above which arose shelves of the same, which supported a few books and papers. The opposite side of the recess contained (as far as I could discern, for it lay in shadow, and I could at any rate have seen it but imperfectly from the place where I was seated) one or two guns, together with swords, pistols, and other arms—a collection which, in a poor cottage, and in a country so peaceful, appeared singular at least, if not even somewhat suspicious.

All these observations, you may suppose, were made much sooner than I have recorded, or you (if you have not skipped) have been able to read them. They were already finished, and I was considering how I should open some communication with the mute inhabitants of the mansion, when my conductor re-entered from the side-door by which he had made his exit.

He had now thrown off his rough riding-cap, and his coarse jockey-coat, and stood before me in a gray jerkin trimmed with black, which sat close to, and set off, his large and sinewy frame, and a pair of trousers of a lighter colour, cut as close to the body as they are used by Highlandmen. His whole dress was of finer cloth than that of the old man; and his linen, so minute was my observation, clean and unsullied. His shirt was without ruffles, and tied at the collar with a black riband, which shewed his strong and muscular neck rising from it, like that of an ancient Hercules. His head was small, with a large forehead, and well-furrowed ears. He wore neither peruke nor hair powder; and his chestnut locks, curling close to his head, like those of an antique statue, shewed not the least touch of time, though the owner must have been at least fifty. His features were high and prominent in such a degree, that one knew not whether to term them harsh or handsome. In either case, the sparkling gray eye, aquiline nose, and well-formed mouth, combined to render his physiognomy noble and expressive. An air of sadness, or severity, or of both, seemed to indicate a melancholy, and, at the same time, a haughty temper. I could not help running mentally over the ancient heroes, to whom I might assimilate the noble form and countenance before me. He was too young, and evinced too little resignation to his fate, to resemble Bolivarus. Coriolanus, standing by the hearth of Tullus Aufidius, came nearer the mark; yet the gloomy and haughty look of the stranger had, perhaps, still more of Marius, seated among the ruins of Carthage.

While I was lost in these imaginations, my host

stood by the fire, gazing on me with the same attention which I paid to him, until, embarrassed by his look, I was about to break silence at all hazards. But the supper, now placed upon the table, reminded me, by its appearance, of those wants which I had almost forgotten while I was gazing on the fine form of my conductor. He spoke at length, and I almost started at the deep rich tone of his voice, though what he said was but to invite me to sit down to the table. He himself assumed the seat of honour, beside which the silver flagon was placed, and beckoned to me to sit down beside him.

Thou knowest thy father's strict and excellent domestic discipline has trained me to hear the invocation of a blessing before we break the daily bread, for which we are taught to pray—I paused a moment, and, without designing to do so, I suppose my manner made him sensible of what I expected. The two domestics, or inferiors, as I should have before observed, were already seated at the bottom of the table, when my host shot a glance of a very peculiar expression towards the old man, observing, with something approaching to a sneer, "Cristal Nixon, say grace—the gentleman expects one."

"The foul fiend shall be clerk, and say amen, when I turn chaplain," growled out the party addressed, in tones which might have become the condition of a dying bear; "if the gentleman is a whig, he may please himself with his own mummery. My faith is neither in word nor writ, but in barley bread and brown ale."

"Mabel Moffat," said my guide, looking at the old woman, and raising his sonorous voice, probably because she was hard of hearing, "canst thou ask a blessing upon our victuals?"

The old woman shook her head, kissed the cross which hung from her rosary, and was silent.

"Mabel will say grace for no heretic," said the master of the house, with the same latent sneer on his brow and in his accent.

At the same moment, the side-door already mentioned opened, and the young woman (so she proved) whom I had first seen at the door of the cottage, advanced a little way into the room, then stopped bashfully, as if she had observed that I was looking at her, and asked the master of the house, "if he had called?"

"Not louder than to make old Mabel hear me," he replied; "and yet," he added, as she turned to retire, "it is a shame a stranger should see a house where not one of the family can or will say a grace, — do thou be our chaplain."

The girl, who was really pretty, came forward with timid modesty, and, apparently unconscious that she was doing anything uncommon, pronounced the benediction in a silver-toned voice, and with affecting simplicity—her cheek colouring just so much as to shew that on a less solemn occasion, she would have felt more embarrassed.

Now, if thou expectest a fine description of this young woman, Alan Fairford, in order to entitle thee to taunt me with having found a Dulcinea in the inhabitant of a fisherman's cottage on the Solway Frith, thou shalt be disappointed; for, having said she seemed very pretty, and that she was a sweet and gentle-speaking creature, I have said all concerning her that I can tell thee. She vanished when the benediction was spoken.

My host, with a muttered remark on the cold of

¹ The frame of wooden shelves placed in a Scottish kitchen for holding plates.

our ride, and the keen air of the Solway Firth, to which he did not seem to wish an answer, loaded my plate from Mabel's grillade, which, with a large wooden bowl of potatoes, formed our whole meal. A sprinkling from the lemon gave a much higher zest than the usual condiment of vinegar; and I promise you that, whatever I might hitherto have felt, either of curiosity or suspicion, did not prevent me from making a most excellent supper, during which little passed betwixt me and my entertainer, unless that he did the usual honours of the table with courtesy, indeed, but without even the affectation of hearty hospitality, which those in his (apparent) condition generally affect on such occasions, even when they do not actually feel it. On the contrary, his manner seemed that of a polished landlord towards an unexpected and unwelcome guest, whom, for the sake of his own credit, he receives with civility, but without either good-will or cheerfulness.

If you ask how I learned all this, I cannot tell you; nor, were I to write down at length the insignificant intercourses which took place between us, would it perhaps serve to justify these observations. It is sufficient to say, that in helping his dogs, which he did from time to time with great liberality, he seemed to discharge a duty much more pleasing to himself, than when he paid the same attention to his guest. Upon the whole, the result on my mind was as I tell it you.

When supper was over, a small case-bottle of brandy, in a curious frame of silver filigree, circulated to the guests. I had already taken a small glass of the liquor, and, when it had passed to Mabel and to Cristal, and was again returned to the upper end of the table, I could not help taking the bottle in my hand, to look more at the armorial bearings, which were chased with considerable taste on the silver framework. Encountering the eye of my entertainer, I instantly saw that my curiosity was highly distasteful; he frowned, bit his lip, and showed such uncontrollable signs of impatience, that, setting the bottle immediately down, I attempted some apology. To this he did not deign either to reply, or even to listen; and Cristal, at a signal from his master, removed the object of my curiosity, as well as the cup, upon which the same arms were engraved.

There ensued an awkward pause, which I endeavoured to break by observing, that "I feared my intrusion upon his hospitality had put his family to some inconvenience."

"I hope you see no appearance of it, sir," he replied, with cold civility. "What inconvenience a family so retired as ours may suffer from receiving an unexpected guest, is like to be trifling, in comparison of what the visitor himself sustains from want of his accustomed comforts. So far, therefore, as our connection stands, our accounts stand clear."

Notwithstanding this discouraging reply, I blundered on, as is usual in such cases, wishing to appear civil, and being, perhaps, in reality the very reverse. "I was afraid," I said, "that my presence had disturbed one of the family" (looking at the side-door) "from his table."

"If," he coldly replied, "I meant the young woman whom I had seen in the apartment, he bid me observe that there was room enough at the table for her to have seated herself, and meat enough, such as it was, for her supper. I might, therefore,

be assured, if she had chosen it, she would have supped with us."

There was no dwelling on this or any other topic longer; for my entertainer, taking up the lamp, observed, that "my wet clothes might reconcile me for the night to their custom of keeping early hours; that he was under the necessity of going abroad by peep of day to-morrow morning, and would call me up at the same time, to point out the way by which I was to return to the Shepherd's Bush."

This left no opening for farther explanation; nor was there room for it on the usual terms of civility; for, as he neither asked my name, nor expressed the least interest concerning my condition, I — the obliged person — had no pretence to trouble him with such inquiries on my part.

He took up the lamp, and led me through the side-door into a very small room, where a bed had been hastily arranged for my accommodation, and, putting down the lamp, directed me to leave my wet clothes on the outside of the door, that they might be exposed to the fire during the night. He then left me, having muttered something which was meant to pass for good-night.

I obeyed his directions with respect to my clothes, the rather that in despite of the spirits which I had drunk, I felt my teeth begin to chatter, and received various hints from an anguish feeling, that a town-bred youth, like myself, could not at once rush into all the hardihood of country sports with impunity. But my bed, though coarse and hard, was dry and clean; and I soon was so little occupied with my heats and tremors, as to listen with interest to a heavy sleet, which seemed to be that of my landlord, traversing the boards (there was no ceiling, as you may believe) which roofed my apartment. Light, glancing through these rude planks, became visible as soon as my lamp was extinguished; and as the noise of the slow, solemn, and regular step continued, and I could distinguish that the person turned and returned as he reached the end of the apartment, it seemed clear to me that the walker was engaged in no domestic occupation, but merely pacing to and fro for his own pleasure. "An odd amusement this," I thought, "for one who had been engaged at least a part of the preceding day in violent exercise, and who talked of rising by the peep of dawn on the ensuing morning."

Meantime I heard the storm, which had been brewing during the evening, begin to descend with a vengeance; sounds, as of distant thunder, (the noise of the more distant waves, doubtless, on the shore,) mingled with the roaring of the neighbouring torrent, and with the crashing, groaning, and even screaming of the trees in the glen, whose boughs were tormented by the gale. Within the house, windows clattered, and doors clapped, and the walls, though sufficiently substantial for a building of the kind, seemed to me to totter in the tempest.

But still the heavy steps perambulating the apartment over my head, were distinctly heard amid the roar and fury of the elements. I thought more than once I even heard a groan; but I frankly own, that, placed in this unusual situation, my fancy may have misled me. I was tempted several times to call aloud, and ask whether the turmoil around us did not threaten danger to the building which we inhabited; but when I thought of the secluded and unsocial master of the dwelling, who seemed to avoid human society, and to remain unperturbed

amid the elemental war, it seemed, that to speak to him at that moment, would have been to address the spirit of the tempest himself, since no other being, I thought, could have remained calm and tranquil while winds and waters were thus raging around.

In process of time, fatigue prevailed over anxiety and curiosity. The storm abated, or my senses became deadened to its terrors, and I fell asleep ere yet the mysterious paces of my host had ceased to shake the flooring over my head.

It might have been expected that the novelty of my situation, although it did not prevent my slumbers, would have at least diminished their profoundness, and shortened their duration. It proved otherwise, however; for I never slept more soundly in my life, and only awoke when, at morning dawn, my landlord shook me by the shoulder, and dispelled some dream, of which, fortunately for you, I have no recollection, otherwise you would have been favoured with it, in hopes you might have proved a second Daniel upon the occasion.

"You sleep sound—" said his full deep voice; "ere five years have rolled over your head, your slumbers will be lighter—unless ere then you are wrapped in the sleep which is never broken."

"How!" said I, starting up in the bed; "do you know any thing of me—of my prospects—of my views in life?"

"Nothing," he answered, with a grim smile; "but it is evident you are entering upon the world young, inexperienced, and full of hopes, and I do but prophesy to you what I would to any one in your condition.—But come; there lie your clothes—a brown crust and a draught of milk wait you, if you choose to break your fast; but you must make haste."

"I must first," I said, "take the freedom to spend a few minutes alone, before beginning the ordinary works of the day."

"Oh!—umph!—I cry your devotions pardon," he replied, and left the apartment.

Alan, there is something terrible about this man.

I joined him, as I had promised, in the kitchen where we had supped over night, where I found the articles which he had offered me for breakfast, without butter or any other addition.

He walked up and down while I partook of the bread and milk; and the slow measured weighty step seemed identical with those which I had heard last night. His pace, from its funereal slowness, seemed to keep time with some current of internal passion, dark, slow, and unchanged. "We run and leap by the side of a lively and bubbling brook," thought I, internally, "as if we would run a race with it; but beside waters deep, slow, and lonely, our pace is sullen and silent as their course. What thoughts may be now corresponding with that furrowed brow, and bearing time with that heavy step?"

"If you have finished," said he, looking up to me with a glance of impatience, as he observed that I ate no longer, but remained with my eyes fixed upon him, "I wait to shew you the way."

We went out together, no individual of the family having been visible excepting my landlord. I was disappointed of the opportunity which I watched for of giving some gratuity to the domestics, as they seemed to be. As for offering any recompense to

the master of the household, it seemed to me impossible to have attempted it.

What would I have given for a share of thy composure, who wouldst have thrust half-a-crown into a man's hand whose necessities seemed to crave it, conscious that you did right in making the proffer, and not caring sixpence whether you hurt the feelings of him whom you meant to serve! I saw thee once give a penny to a man with a long beard, who, from the dignity of his exterior, might have represented Solon. I had not thy courage, and therefore I made no tender to my mysterious host, although, notwithstanding his display of silver utensils, all around the house bespoke narrow circumstances, if not actual poverty.

We left the place together. But I hear thee murmur thy very new and appropriate ejaculation, *Ohe, just satis!*—The rest for another time. Perhaps I may delay farther communication till I learn how my favours are valued.

LETTER V.

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARRIE LATIMER.

I HAVE thy two last epistles, my dear Darrie, and expecting the third, have been in no hurry to answer them. Do not think my silence ought to be ascribed to my failing to take interest in them, for, truly, they excel (though the task was difficult) thy usual excellings. Since the moon-call who earliest discovered the Pandemonium of Milton in an expiring wood-fire—since the first ingeniousurchin who blew bubbles out of soap and water, thou, my best of friends, hast the highest knack at making histories out of nothing. Wert thou to plant the bean in the nursery-tale, thou wouldst make out, so soon as it began to germinate, that the castle of the giant was about to elevate its battlements on the top of it. All that happens to thee gets a touch of the wonderful and the sublime from thy own rich imagination. Didst ever see what artists call a Claude Lorraine glass, which spreads its own particular hue over the whole landscape which you see through it?—thou beholdest ordinary events just through such a medium.

I have looked carefully at the facts of thy last long letter, and they are just such as might have befallen any little truant of the High School, who had got down to Leith Sands, gone beyond the *prawn-dub*, wet his hose and shoon, and, finally, had been carried off in compassion, by some high-kilted fishwife, cursing all the while the trouble which the brat occasioned her.

I admire the figure which thou must have made, clinging for dear life behind the old fellow's back—thy jaws clattering with fear, thy muscles cramped with anxiety. Thy execrable supper of broiled salmon, which was enough to ensure the nightmare's regular visits for a twelvemonth, may be termed a real affliction; but as for the storm of Thursday last, (such, I observe, was the date,) it roared, whistled, howled, and bellowed, as fearfully amongst the old chimney heads in the Candle-maker-row, as it could on the Solway shore, for the very wind of it—*teste me per totam noctem vigilante*. And then in the morning again, when—Lord, help you—in your sentimental delicacy you bid the poor

man adieu, without even tendering him *his* crown for supper and lodging!

You laugh at me for giving a penny (to be accurate, though, thou shouldst have said sixpence) to an old fellow, whom thou, in thy high flight, wouldst have sent home supperless, because he was like Solon or Belisarius. But you forget that the affront descended like a benediction into the pouch of the old gaberlunzie, who overflowed in blessings upon the generous donor—Long ere he would have thanked thee, Darsie, for thy barren veneration of his beard and his bearing. Then you laugh at my good father's retreat from Falkirk, just as if it were not time for a man to trudge when three or four mountain knives, with naked claymores, and heels as light as their fingers, were scampering after him, crying *furish*. You remember what he said himself when the Laird of Buckleat told him that *furish* signified "stay a while." "What the devil," he said, surprised out of his Presbyterian correctness by the unreasonableness of such a request under the circumstances, "would the scoundrels have had me stop to have my head cut off!"

Imagine such a train at your own heels, Darsie, and ask yourself whether you would not exert your legs as fast as you did in flying from the Solway tide. And yet you impeach my father's courage. I tell you he has courage enough to do what is right, and to spurn what is wrong—courage enough to defend a righteous cause with hand and purse, and to take the part of the poor man against his oppressor, without fear of the consequences to himself. This is civil courage, Darsie; and it is of little consequence to most men in this age and country, whether they ever possess military courage or no.

Do not think I am angry with you, though, thus attempt to rectify your opinions on my father's account. I am well aware that, upon the whole, he is scarce regarded with more respect by me than by thee. And, while I am in a serious humour, which it is difficult to preserve with one who is perpetually tempting me to laugh at him, pray, dearest Darsie, let not thy ardour for adventure carry thee into more such scrapes as that of the Solway Sands. The rest of the story is a mere imagination; but that stormy evening might have proved, as the Clown says to Lear, "a naughty night to swim in."

As for the rest, if you can work mysterious and romantic heroes out of old cross-grained fishermen, why, I for one will reap some amusement by the metamorphosis. Yet hold! even there, there is some need of caution. This same female chieftain—thou sayest so little of her, and so much of every one else, that it excites some doubt in my mind. *Very pretty* she is, it seems—and that is all thy discretion informs me of. There are cases in which silence implies other things than consent. Wert thou ashamed or afraid, Darsie, to trust thyself with the praises of the very pretty grace-sayer?—As I live, thou blushest! Why, do I not know thee an inveterate Squire of Dames? and have I not been in thy confidence? An elegant elbow, displayed when the rest of the figure was muffled in a cardinal, or a neat well-turned ankle and instep, seen by chance as its owner tripped up the Old Assembly Close, turned thy brain for eight days. Thou wert once caught, if I remember rightly, with a single

glance of a single matchless eye, which, when the fair owner withdrew her veil, proved to be single, in the literal sense of the word. And, besides, were you not another time enamoured of a voice—a mere voice, that mingled in the psalmody at the Old Greyfriars' Church—until you discovered the proprietor of that dulcet organ to be Miss Dolly MacIzzard, who is both "back and breast," as our saying goes!

All these things considered, and contrasted with thy artful silence on the subject of this grace-saying Nereid of thine, I must beg thee to be more explicit upon that subject in thy next, unless thou wouldst have me form the conclusion that thou thinkest more of her than thou carest to talk of.

You will not expect much news from this quarter, as you know the monotony of my life, and are aware it must at present be devoted to uninterrupted study. You have said a thousand times, that I am only qualified to make my way by dint of plodding, and therefore plod I must.

My father seems to be more impatient of your absence than he was after your first departure. He is sensible, I believe, that our solitary meals want the light which your gay humour was wont to throw over them, and feels melancholy as men do when the light of the sun is no longer upon the landscape. If it is thus with him, thou mayest imagine it is much more so with me, and canst conceive how heartily I wish that thy frolic were ended, and thou once more our inmate.

I resume my pen, after a few hours' interval, to say that an incident has occurred, on which you will yourself be building a hundred castles in the air, and which even I, jealous as I am of such baseless fabrics, cannot but own affords ground for singular conjecture.

My father has of late taken me frequently along with him when he attends the Courts, in his anxiety to see me properly initiated into the practical forms of business. I own I feel something on his account and my own from this over-anxiety, which, I dare say, renders us both ridiculous. But what signifies my repugnance? my father drags me up to his counsel learned in the law,—"Are you quite ready to come on to-day, Mr Crossbite?"—This is my son, destined for the bar—I take the liberty to bring him with me to-day to the consultation, merely that he may see how these things are managed."

Mr Crossbite smiles and bows, as a lawyer smiles on the solicitor who employs him, and I dare say, thrusts his tongue into his cheek, and whispers into the first great wig that passes him, "What the d—l does old Fairford mean by letting loose his whelp on me?"

As I stood beside them, too much vexed at the childish part I was made to play to derive much information from the valuable arguments of Mr Crossbite, I observed a rather elderly man, who stood with his eyes firmly bent on my father, as if he only waited an end of the business in which he was engaged, to address him. There was something, I thought, in the gentleman's appearance which commanded attention.—Yet his dress was not in the present taste, and though it had once been magnificent, was now antiquated and unfashionable.

1 Of old this almost deserted alley formed the most common access betwixt the High Street and the southern suburbs.

ashionable. His coat was of branched velvet, with a satin lining, a waistcoat of violet-coloured silk, much embroidered; his breeches the same stuff as the coat. He wore square-toed shoes, with fore-tops, as they are called; and his silk stockings were rolled up over his knee, as you may have seen in pictures, and here and there on some of those originals who seem to pique themselves on dressing after the mode of Methuselah. A *chapeau bras* and sword necessarily completed his equipment, which, though out of date, shewed that it belonged to a man of distinction.

The instant Mr. Crossbite had ended what he had to say, this gentleman walked up to my father, with, "Your servant, Mr. Fairford—it is long since you and I met."

My father, whose politeness, you know, is exact and formal, bowed, and hemmed, and was confused, and at length professed that the distance since they had met was so great, that though he remembered the face perfectly, the name, he was sorry to say, had—really—somehow—escaped his memory.

"Have you forgot Herries of Birronswork?" said the gentleman, and my father bowed even more profoundly than before; though I think his reception of his old friend seemed to lose some of the respectful civility which he bestowed on him while his name was yet unknown. It now seemed to be something like the lip-courtesy which the heart would have denied had ceremony permitted.

My father, however, again bowed low, and hoped he saw him well.

"So well, my good Mr. Fairford, that I chime hither determined to renew my acquaintance with one or two old friends, and with you in the first place. I halt at my old resting place—you must dine with me to-day at Paterson's, at the head of the Horse Wynd—it is near your new fashionable dwelling, and I have business with you."

My father excused himself respectfully, and not without embarrassment—"he was particularly engaged at home."

"Then I will dine with you, man," said Mr. Herries of Birronswork; "the few minutes you can spare me after dinner will suffice for my business; and I will not prevent you a moment from minding your own—I am no bottle-man."

You have often remarked that my father, though a scrupulous observer of the rites of hospitality, seems to exercise them rather as a duty than as a pleasure; indeed, but for a conscientious wish to feed the hungry and receive the stranger, his doors would open to guests much seldomer than is the case. I never saw so strong an example of this peculiarity, (which I should otherwise have said is caricatured in your description,) as in his mode of homologating the self-given invitation of Mr. Herries. The embarrassed brow, and the attempt at a smile which accompanied his, "We will expect the honour of seeing you in Brown Square at three o'clock," could not deceive any one, and did not impose upon the old Laird. It was with a look of scorn which he replied, "I will relieve you then till that hour, Mr. Fairford;" and his whole manner seemed to say, "It is my pleasure to dine with you, and I care not whether I am welcome or no."

When he turned away, I asked my father who he was.

"An unfortunate gentleman," was the reply; "He looks pretty well on his misfortunes," re-

plied I. "I should not have suspected that so gay an outside was lacking a dinner."

"Who told you that he does?" replied my father; "he is *omni suspitione major*, so far as worldly circumstances are concerned—it is to be hoped he makes a good use of them; though, if he does, it will be for the first time in his life."

"He has then been an irregular liver?" insinuated I.

My father replied by that famous brocard with which he silences all unacceptable queries, turning in the slightest degree upon the failings of our neighbours.—"If we mend our own faults, Alan, we shall all of us have enough to do, without sitting in judgment upon other folks."

Here I was again at fault; but rallying once more, I observed, he had the air of a man of high rank and family.

"He is well entitled," said my father, "representing Herries of Birronswork; a branch of that great and once powerful family of Herries, the elder branch whereof merged in the house of Nithsdale at the death of Lord Robin the Philosopher, Anno Domini sixteen hundred and sixty-seven."

"Has he still," said I, "his patrimonial estate of Birronswork?"

"No," replied my father; "so far back as his father's time, it was a mere designation—the property being forfeited by Herbert Herries following his kinsman the Earl of Derwentwater, to the Preston affair in 1715. But they keep up the designation, thinking, doubtless, that their claims may be revived in more favourable times for Jacobites and for Popery; and folks who in my way partake of their fantastic capricious, do yet allow it to pass unchallenged, *ex comitate*, if not *ex misericordia*.—But were he the Pope and the Pretender both, we must get some dinner ready for him, since he has thought fit to offer himself. So hasten home, my lad, and tell Hannah, Cook Epps, and James Wilkinson, to do their best; and do thou look out a pint or two of Maxwell's best—it is in the fifth bin—there are the keys of the wine-cellar.—Do not leave them in the lock—you know poor James's failing, though he is an honest creature under all other temptations—and I have but two bottles of the old brandy left—we must keep it for medicine, Alan."

Away went I—made my preparations—the hour of dinner came, and so did Mr. Herries of Birronswork.

If I had thy power of imagination and description, Darsie, I could make out a fine, dark, mysterious, Rembrandt-looking portrait of this same stranger, which should be as far superior to thy fisherman, as a shirt of chain-mail is to a herring-net. I can assure you there is some matter for description about him; but knowing my own imperfections, I can only say, I thought him eminently disagreeable and ill-bred.—No, *ill-bred* is not the proper word; on the contrary, he appeared to know the rules of good-breeding perfectly, and only to think that the rank of the company did not require that he should attend to them—a view of the matter infinitely more offensive than if his behaviour had been that of uneducated and proper rudeness. While my father said grace, the Laird did all but whistle aloud; and when I, at my father's desire, returned thanks, he used his toothpick, as if he had waited that moment for its exercise.

So much for Kirk—with King, matters went even worse. My father, thou knowest, is particularly full of deference to his guests; and in the present case, he seemed more than usually desirous to escape every cause of dispute. He so far compromised his loyalty, as to announce merely "The King," as his first toast after dinner, instead of the emphatic "King George," which is his usual formula. Our guest made a motion with his glass, so as to pass it over the water-decanter which stood beside him, and added, "Over the water."

My father coloured, but would not seem to hear this. Much more there was of careless and disrespectful in the stranger's manner and tone of conversation; so that though I know my father's prejudices in favour of rank and birth, and though I am aware his otherwise masculine understanding has never entirely shaken off the slavish awe of the great, which in his earlier days they had so many modes of commanding, still I could hardly excuse him for enduring so much insolence—such it seemed to be—as this self-invited guest was disposed to offer to him at his own table.

One can endure a traveller in the same carriage, if he trends upon your toes by accident, or even through negligence; but it is very different when, knowing that they are rather of a tender description, he continues to pound away at them with his hoofs. In my poor opinion—and I am a man of peace—you can, in that case, hardly avoid a declaration of war.

I believe my father read my thoughts in my eye; for, pulling out his watch, he said, "Half past four, Alan—you should be in your own room by this time—Birrensworke will excuse you."

Our visitor nodded carelessly, and I had no longer any pretence to remain. But as I left the room, I heard this Magnate of Netherdale distinctly mention the name of Latimer. I lingered; but at length a direct hint from my father obliged me to withdraw; and when, an hour afterwards, I was summoned to partake of a cup of tea, our guest had departed. He had business that evening in the High Street, and could not spare time even to drink tea. I could not help saying, I considered his departure as a relief from incivility. "What business has he to upbraid us," I said, "with the change of our dwelling from a more inconvenient to a better quarter of the town? What was it to him if we chose to imitate some of the conveniences or luxuries of an English dwelling-house, instead of living piled up above each other in flats? Have his patrician birth and aristocratic fortunes given him any right to censure those who dispose of the fruits of their own industry, according to their own pleasure?"

My father took a long pinch of snuff, and replied, "Very well, Alan; very well indeed. I wish Mr Crocodile, or Counsellor Pest had heard you; they must have acknowledged that you have a talent for forensic elocution; and it may not be amiss to try a little declamation at home now and then, to gather audacity and keep yourself in breath. But touching the subject of this parable of words, it's not worth a pinch of tobacco. D'ye think that I care for Mr Herries of Birrensworke more than any other gentleman who comes here about business, although I do not care to go tilting at his throat, because he speaks like a gray goose, as he is! But to say no more about him, I want to have Darsie Latimer's present direction; for it is possible I may have to

write the lad a line with my own hand—and yet I do not well know—but give me the direction at all events."

I did so, and if you have heard from my father accordingly, you know more, probably, about the subject of this letter than I who write it. But if you have not, then shall I have discharged a friend's duty, in letting you know that there certainly is something afloat between this disagreeable Laird and my father, in which you are considerably interested.

Adieu! and although I have given thee a subject for waking dreams, beware of building a castle too heavy for the foundation; which in the present instance, is barely the word Latimer occurring in a conversation betwixt a gentleman of Dumfriesshire and a W.S. of Edinburgh—*Cetera prorsus ignoro.*

LETTER VI.

DARSIE LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFAX.

[In continuation of Letters III. and IV.]

I TOLD thee I walked out into the open air with my grave and stern landlord. I could now see more perfectly than on the preceding night the secluded glen in which stood the two or three cottages which appeared to be the abode of him and his family.

It was so narrow, in proportion to its depth, that no ray of the morning sun was likely to reach it till it should rise high in the horizon. Looking up the dell, you saw a brawling brook issuing in hasty haste from a covert of underwood, like a race-horse impatient to arrive at the goal; and, if you gazed yet more earnestly, you might observe part of a high waterfall glimmering through the foliage, and giving occasion, doubtless, to the precipitate speed of the brook. Lower down, the stream became more placid, and opened into a quiet piece of water, which afforded a rude haven to two or three fishermen's boats, then lying high and dry on the sand, the tide being out. Two or three miserable huts could be seen beside this little haven, inhabited probably by the owners of the boats, but inferior in every respect to the establishment of mine host, though that was miserable enough.

I had but a minute or two to make these observations, yet during that space my companion saluted symptoms of impatience, and more than once shouted, "Cristal—Cristal Nixon," until the old man of the preceding evening appeared at the door of one of the neighbouring cottages or out-houses, leading the strong black horse which I before commemorated, ready bridled and saddled. My conductor made Cristal a sign with his finger, and, turning from the cottage door, led the way up the steep path or ravine which connected the sequestered dell with the open country.

Had I been perfectly aware of the character of the road down which I had been hurried with so much impetuosity on the preceding evening, I greatly question if I should have ventured the descent; for it deserved no better name than the channel of a torrent, now in a good measure filled with water, that dashed in foam and fury into the dell, being swelled with the rains of the preceding night. I ascended this ugly path with some diffi-

culty, although on foot, and felt dizzy when I observed, from such traces as the rains had not obliterated, that the horse seemed almost to have slid down it upon his hanches the evening before.

My host threw himself on his horse's back, without placing a foot in the stirrup—passed me in the perilous ascent, against which he pressed his steed as if the animal had had the footing of a wild cat. The water and mud splashed from his heels in his reckless course, and a few bounds placed him on the top of the bank, where I presently joined him, and found the horse and rider standing still as a statue; the former panting and expanding his broad nostrils to the morning wind, the latter motionless, with his eye fixed on the first beams of the rising sun, which already began to peer above the eastern horizon, and gild the distant mountains of Cumberland and Liddesdale.

He seemed in a reverie, from which he started at my approach, and, putting his horse in motion, led the way, at a leisurely pace, through a broken and sandy road, which traversed a waste, level, and uncultivated tract of down, intermixed with morasses, much like that in the neighbourhood of my quarters at Shepherd's Bush. Indeed, the whole open ground of this district, where it approaches the sea, has, except in a few favoured spots, the same uniform and dreary character.

Advancing about a hundred yards from the brink of the glen, we gained a still more extensive command of this desolate prospect, which seemed even more dreary, as contrasted with the opposite shores of Cumberland, crossed and intersected by ten thousand lines of trees growing in hedge rows, shaded with groves and woods of considerable extent, animated by hamlets and villas, from which thin clouds of smoke already gave sign of human life and human industry.

My conductor had extended his arm, and was pointing the road to Shepherd's Bush, when the step of a horse was heard approaching us. He looked sharply round, and having observed who was approaching, proceeded in his instructions to me, planting himself at the same time in the very middle of the path, which, at the place where we halted, had a slough on the one side, and a sand-bank on the other.

I observed that the rider who approached us slackened his horse's pace from a slow trot to a walk, as if desirous to suffer us to proceed, or at least to avoid passing us at a spot where the difficulty of doing so must have brought us very close to each other. You know my old failing, Alan, and that I am always willing to attend to anything in preference to the individual who has for the time possession of the conversation.

Agreeably to this amiable propensity, I was internally speculating concerning the cause of the rider keeping aloof from us, when my companion, elevating his deep voice so suddenly and so sternly, as at once to recall my wandering thoughts, exclaimed, "In the name of the devil, young man, do you think that others have no better use for their time than you have, that you oblige me to repeat the same thing to you three times over?—Do you see, I say, yonder thing at a mile's distance, that looks like a finger-post, or rather like a gallows?—I would it had a dreaming fool hanging upon it, as an example to all meditative moon-calves!—Yon gibbet-looking pole will guide you to the bridge,

when you must pass the large brook; then proceed straight forwards, till several roads divide at a cairn.—Plague on thee, thou art wandering again!"

It is indeed quite true, that at this moment the horseman approached us, and my attention was again called to him as I made way to let him pass. His whole exterior at once shewed that he belonged to the Society of Friends, or, as the world and the world's law calls them, Quakers. A strong and useful iron-gray galloway shewed, by its sleek and good condition, that the merciful man was merciful to his beast. His accoutrements were in the usual unostentatious, but clean and serviceable order, which characterizes these sectaries. His long surtout of dark-gray superfine cloth descended down to the middle of his leg, and was buttoned up to his chin to defend him against the morning air. As usual, his ample beaver hung down without button or loop, and shaded a comely and placid countenance, the gravity of which appeared to contain some seasoning of humour, and had nothing in common with the pinched puritanical air affected by devotees in general. The brow was open and free from wrinkles, whether of age or hypocrisy. The eye was clear, calm, and considerate, yet appeared to be disturbed by apprehension, not to say fear, as, pronouncing the usual salutation of, "I wish thee a good morrow, friend," he indicated, by turning his palfrey close to one side of the path, a wish to glide past us with as little trouble as possible—just as a traveller would choose to pass a mastiff of whose peaceable intentions he is by no means confident.

But my friend, not meaning, perhaps, that he should get off so easily, put his horse quite across the path, so that, without plunging into the slough, or scrambling up the bank, the Quaker could not have passed him. Neither of these was an experiment without hazard greater than the passenger seemed willing to incur. He halted, therefore, as if waiting till my companion should make way for him; and, as they sat fronting each other, I could not help thinking that they might have formed no bad emblem of Peace and War; for, although my conductor was unarmed, yet the whole of his manner, his stern look, and his upright seat on horseback, were entirely those of a soldier in undress. He accosted the Quaker in these words,—"So be! friend Joshua—thou art early to the road this morning. Has the spirit moved thee and thy righteous brethren to act with some honesty, and pull down yonder tide-nets that keep the fish from coming up the river?"

"Surely, friend, not so," answered Joshua, firmly, but good-humouredly at the same time; "thou canst not expect that our own hands should pull down what our purses established. Thou killest the fish with spear, line, and coble-net; and we, with snarus and with nets, which work by the ebb and the flow of the tide. Each doth what seems best in his eyes to secure a share of the blessing which Providence hath bestowed on the river, and that within his own bounds. I prithee seek no quarrel against us, for thou shalt have no wrong at our hand."

"Be assured I will take none at the hand of any man, whether his bit be cocked or broad-brimmed," answered the fisherman. "I tell you in fair terms, Joshua Geddes, that you and your partners are using unlawful craft to destroy the fish in the Sulway by stake-nets and weirs; and that we, who fish

furly, and like men, as our fathers did, have daily and yearly less sport and less profit. Do not think gravity or hypocrisy can carry it off as you have done. The world knows you, and we know you. You will destroy the salmon which makes the livelihood of fifty poor families, and then wipe your mouth, and go to make a speech at Meeting. But do not hope it will last thus. I give you fair warning, we will be upon you one morning soon, when we will not leave a stake standing in the pools of the Solway; and down the tide they shall every one go, and well if we do not send a lessee along with them."

"Friend," replied Joshua, with a constrained smile, "but that I know thou dost not mean as thou say'st, I would tell thee we are under the protection of this country's laws; nor do we the less trust to obtain their protection, that our principles permit us not, by any act of violent resistance, to protect ourselves."

"All villainous cant and cowardice," exclaimed the fisherman, "and assumed merely as a cloak to your hypocritical avarice."

"Nay, say not cowardice, my friend," answered the Quaker, "since thou knowest there may be as much courage in enduring as in acting; and I will be judged by this youth, or by any one else, whether there is not more cowardice—even in the opinion of that world whose thoughts are the breath in thy nostrils—in the armed oppressor who doth injury, than in the defenceless and patient sufferer, who endureth it with constancy."

"I will change no more words with you on the subject," said the fisherman, who, as if something moved at the last argument which Mr Cuddes had used, now made room for him to pass forward on his journey.—"Do not forget, however," he added, "that you have had fair warning, nor suppose that we will accept of fair words in apology for foul play. These nets of yours are unlawful—they spoil our fishings—we will have them down at all risks and hazards. I am a man of my word, friend Joshua."

"I trust thou art," said the Quaker; "but thou art the rather bound to be cautious in rashly affirming what thou wilt never execute. For I tell thee, friend, that though there is, as great a difference between thee and one of our people, as there is between a lion and a sheep, yet I know and believe thou hast so much of the lion in thee, that thou wouldst scarce employ thy strength and thy rage upon that which professeth no means of resistance. Report says so much good of thee, at least, if it says little more."

"Time will try," answered the fisherman; "and hark thee, Joshua, before we part I will put thee in the way of doing one good deed, which, credit me, is better than twenty moral speeches. Here is a stranger youth, whom Heaven has so scantily gifted with brains, that he will bewilder himself in the Sands, as he did last night, unless thou wilt kindly show him the way to Shepherd's Bush; for I have been in vain endeavouring to make him comprehend the road thither.—Hast thou so much charity under thy simplicity, Quaker, as to do this good turn?"

"Nay, it is thou, friend," answered Joshua, "that dost lack charity, to suppose any one unwilling to do so simple a kindness."

"Thou art right—I should have remembered it can cost thee nothing.—Young gentleman, this pious pattern of primitive simplicity will teach thee the

right way to the Shepherd's Bush—ay, and with himself shear thee like a sheep, if you come to buying and selling with him."

He then abruptly asked me, how long I intended to remain at Shepherd's Bush.

I replied, I was at present uncertain—as long, probably, as I could amuse myself in the neighbourhood.

"You are fond of sport?" he added, in the same tone of brief inquiry.

I answered in the affirmative, but added, I was totally inexperienced.

"Perhaps if you reside here for some days," he said, "we may meet again, and I may have the chance of giving you a lesson."

Ere I could express either thanks or assent, he turned short round with a wave of his hand, by way of adieu, and rode back to the verge of the dell from which we had emerged together; and as he remained standing upon the banks, I could long hear his voice while he shouted down to those within its recesses.

Meanwhile the Quaker and I proceeded on our journey for some time in silence; he restraining his soberminded stead to a pace which might have suited a much less active walker than myself, and looking, on me from time to time with an expression of curiosity, mingled with benignity. For my part, I cared not to speak first. It happened I had never before been in company with one of this particular sect, and, afraid that in addressing him I might unwittingly infringe upon some of their prejudices or peculiarities, I patiently remained silent. At length he asked me, whether I had been long in the service of the Laird, as men called him.

I repeated the words "in his service;" with such an accent of surprise, as induced him to say, "Nay, but, friend, I mean no offence; perhaps I should have said in his society—an inmate, I mean, in his house?"

"I am totally unknown to the person from whom we have just parted," said I, "and our connection is only temporary.—He had the charity to give me his guidance from the Sands, and a night's harbourage from the tempest. So our acquaintance began, and there it is likely to end; for you may observe that our friend is by no means apt to encourage familiarity."

"So little so," answered my companion, "that thy case is, I think, the first in which I ever heard of his receiving any one into his house; that is, if thou hast really spent the night there."

"Why should you doubt it?" replied I; "there is no motive I can have to deceive you, nor is the object worth it."

"Be not angry with me," said the Quaker; "but thou knowest that thine own people do not, as we humbly endeavour to do, confine themselves within the simplicity of truth, but employ the language of falsehood, not only for profit, but for compliment, and sometimes for mere diversion. I have heard various stories of my neighbour; of most of which I only believe a small part, and even then they are difficult to reconcile with each other. But this being the first time I ever heard of his receiving a stranger within his dwelling, made me express some doubts. I pray thee let them not offend thee."

"He does not," said I, "appear to possess in much abundance the means of exercising hospitality, and so may be excused from offering it in ordinary cases."

"That is to say, friend," replied Joshua, "thou hast supped ill, and perhaps breakfasted worse. Now my small tenement, called Mount Sharon, is nearer to us by two miles than thine inn; and although going thither may prolong thy walk, as taking thee off the straighter road to Shepherd's Bush, yet methinks exercise will suit thy youthful limbs, as well as a good plain meal thy youthful appetite. What say'st thou, my young acquaintance?"

"If it puts you not to inconvenience," I replied; for the invitation was cordially given, and my bread and milk had been hastily swallowed, and in small quantity.

"Nay," said Joshua, "use not the language of compliment with those who renounce it. Had this poor courtesy been very inconvenient, perhaps I had not offered it."

"I accept the invitation then," said I, "in the same good spirit in which you give it."

The Quaker smiled, reached me his hand, I shook it, and we travelled on in great cordiality with each other. The fact is, I was much entertained by contrasting in my own mind, the open manner of the kind-hearted Joshua Goddes, with the abrupt, dark, and lofty demeanour of my entertainer on the preceding evening. Both were blunt and unceremonious; but the plainness of the Quaker had the character of devotional simplicity, and was mingled with the more real kindness, as if honest Joshua was desirous of atoning, by his sincerity, for the lack of external courtesy. On the contrary, the manners of the fisherman were those of one to whom the rules of good behaviour might be familiar, but who, either from pride or misanthropy, scorned to observe them. Still I thought of him with interest and curiosity, notwithstanding so much about him that was repulsive; and I promised myself, in the course of my conversation with the Quaker, to learn all that he knew on the subject. He turned the conversation, however, into a different channel, and inquired into my own condition of life, and views in visiting this remote frontier.

I only thought it necessary to mention my name, and add, that I had been educated to the law, but finding myself possessed of some independence, I had of late permitted myself some relaxation, and was residing at Shepherd's Bush to enjoy the pleasure of angling.

"I do thee no harm, young man," said my new friend, "in wishing thee a better employment for thy grave hours, and a more humane amusement (if amusement thou must have) for those of a lighter character."

"You are severe, sir?" I replied. "I heard you but a moment since refer yourself to the protection of the laws of the country—if there be laws, there must be lawyers to explain, and judges to administer them."

Joshua smiled, and pointed to the sheep which were grazing on the downs over which we were travelling.—"Were a wolf," he said, "to come even now upon yonder flocks, they would crowd for protection, doubtless, around the shepherd and his dogs; yet they are bitten and harassed daily by the one, and finally killed and eaten by the other. But I say not this to shock you; for, though laws and lawyers are evils, yet they are necessary evils in this predatory state of society, till man shall learn to render unto his fellows that which is their due, according to the light of his own con-

science, and through no other compulsion. Meanwhile, I have known many righteous men who have followed thy intended profession in honesty and uprightness of walk. The greater their merit, who walk erect in a path which so many find slippery."

"And angling," said I,—"you object to that also as an amusement, you who, if I understood rightly what passed between you and my late landlord, are yourself a proprietor of fisheries."

"Not a proprietor," he replied, "I am only, in copartnership with others, a tacksman or lessee of some valuable salmon fisheries a little down the coast. But mistake me not. The evil of angling, with which I class all sports, as they are called, which have the sufferings of animals for their end and object, does not consist in the mere catching and killing those animals with which the bounty of Providence hath stocked the earth for the good of man, but in making their protracted agony a principle of delight and enjoyment. I do indeed cause these fisheries to be conducted for the necessary taking, killing, and selling the fish; and, in the same way, were I a farmer, I should send my lambs to market. But I should as soon think of contriving myself a sport and amusement out of the trade of the butcher as out of that of the fisher."

We argued the point no farther; for though I thought his arguments a little too high-strained, yet as my mind acquitted me of having taken delight in aught but the theory of field-sports, I did not think myself called upon stubbornly to advocate a practice which had afforded me so little pleasure.

We had by this time arrived at the remains of an old finger-post, which my host had formerly pointed out as a landmark. Here, a ruinous wooden bridge, supported by long posts resembling crutches, served me to get across the water, while my new friend sought a ford a good way higher up, for the stream was considerably swelled.

As I paused for his rejoining me, I observed an angler at a little distance pouching trout after trout, as fast almost as he could cast his line; and I own, in spite of Joshua's lecture on humanity, I could not but envy his adroitness and success,—so natural is the love of sport to our minds, or so easily are we taught to assimilate success in field-sports with ideas of pleasure, and with the praise due to address and agility. I soon recognized in the successful angler little Benjie, who had been my guide, and tutor in that gentle art, as you have learned from my former letters. I called—I whistled—the rascal recognized me, and, starting like a guilty thing, seemed hesitating whether to approach or to run away; and when he determined on the former, it was to assail me with a loud, clamorous, and exaggerated report of the anxiety of all at the Shepherd's Bush for my personal safety; how my landlady had wept, how Sam and the ostler had not the heart to go to bed, but sat up all night drinking—and how he himself had been up long before day-break to go in quest of me.

"And you were switching the water, I suppose," said I, "to discover my dead body?"

This observation produced a long "Na—a—a—" of acknowledged detection; but, with his natural impudence, and confidence in my good-nature, he immediately added, "that he thought I would like a fresh trout or two for breakfast, and the water

being in such a rare trim for the salmon race, he couldn't help taking a cast."

While we were engaged in this discussion, the honest Quaker returned to the farther end of the wooden bridge to tell me he could not venture to cross the brook in its present state, but would be under the necessity to ride round by the stone bridge, which was a mile and a half higher up than his own house. He was about to give me directions how to proceed without him, and inquire for his sister, when I suggested to him, that if he pleased to trust his horse to little Benjie, the boy might carry him round by the bridge, while we walked the shorter and more pleasant road.

Joshua shook his head for he was well acquainted with Benjie, who, he said, was the naughtiest varlet in the whole neighbourhood. Nevertheless, rather than part company, he agreed to put the pony under his charge for a short season, with many injunctions that he should not attempt to mount, but lead the pony (even Solomon) by the bridge, under the assurances of sixpence in case of proper demeanour, and penalty that if he transgressed the orders given him, "verily he should be scourged."

Promises cost Benjie nothing, and he showered them out wholesale; till the Quaker at length yielded up the bridge to him, repeating his charges and enforcing them by holding up his forefinger. On my part, I called to Benjie to leave the fish he had taken at Mount Sharps, making, at the same time, an apologetic countenance to my new friend, not being quite aware whether the compliment would be agreeable to such a condefiner of field-sports.

He understood me at once, and reminded me of the practical distinction betwixt catching the animals as an object of cruel and wanton sport, and eating them as lawful and gratifying articles of food, after they were killed. On the latter point he had no scruples; but, on the contrary, assured me, that this brook contained the real red trout, so highly esteemed by all connoisseurs, and that, when eaten within an hour of their being caught, they had a peculiar firmness of substance and delicacy of flavour, which rendered them an agreeable addition to a morning meal, especially when earned, like ours, by early rising, and an hour or two's wholesome exercise.

But to thy alarm be it spoken, Alan, we did not come so far as the frying of our fish without farther adventure. So it is only to spare thy patience, and mine own eyes, that I pull up for the present, and send thee the rest of my story in a subsequent letter.

LETTER VII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

[In continuation.]

LITTLE BENJIE, with the pony, having been sent off on the left side of the brook, the Quaker and I sauntered on, like the cavalry and infantry of the same army occupying the opposite banks of a river, and observing the same line of march. But, while

¹ The bait made of salmon-roe salted and preserved. In a wooden river, and about the month of October, it is a most deadly bait.

my worthy companion was assuring me of a pleasant greensward walk to his mansion; little Benjie, who, had been charged to keep in sight, chose to deviate from the path assigned him, and, turning to the right, led his charge, Solomon, out of our vision.

"The villain means to mount him!" cried Joshua, with more vivacity than was consistent with his profession of passive endurance.

I endeavoured to appease his apprehensions; as he pushed on, wiping his brow with vexation, assuring him, that if the boy did mount, he would, for his own sake, ride gently.

"You do not know him," said Joshua, rejecting all consolation; "he do any thing gently! — no, he will gallop Solomon — he will misuse the sober patience of the poor animal who has borne me so long! Yes, I was given over to my own devices when I ever let him touch the bridle, for such a little miscreant there never was before him in this country."

He then proceeded to expatiate on every sort of rustic enormity of which he accused Benjie. He had been suspected of snaring partridges — was detected by Joshua himself in luring singing-birds — stood fully charged with having worried several cats, by aid of a lurcher which attended him, and which was as lean, and ragged, and mischievous, as his master. Finally, Benjie stood accused of having stolen a duck, to hunt it with the said lurcher, which was as dexterous on water as on land. I chimed-in with my friend, in order to avoid giving him farther irritation, and declared, I should be disposed, from my own experience, to give up Benjie as one of Satan's imps. Joshua Geddes began to censure the phrase as too much exaggerated, and otherwise unbecoming the mouth of a reflecting person; and, just as I was apologizing for it, as being a term of common parlance, we heard certain sounds on the opposite side of the brook, which seemed to indicate that Solomon and Benjie were at issue together. The sand-hills behind which Benjie seemed to take his course, had concealed from us, as doubtless he meant they should, his ascent into the forbidden saddle, and, putting Solomon to his mettle, which he was seldom called upon to exert, they had cantered away together in great amity, till they came near to the ford from which the palfrey's legitimate owner had already turned back.

Here a contest of opinions took place between the horse and his rider. The latter, according to his instructions, attempted to direct Solomon towards the distant bridge of stone; but Solomon opined that the ford was the shortest way to his own stable. The point was sharply contested, and we heard Benjie gee-hupping, tchek-tcheking, and, above all, flogging in great style; while Solomon, who, clothe in his general habits, was now stirred beyond his patience, made a great trampling and recalcitration; and it was their joint noise which we heard, without being able to see, though Joshua might too well guess, the cause of it.

Alarmed at these indications, the Quaker began to shout out, "Benjie — thou varlet! — Solomon — thou fool!" when the couple presented themselves in full drive, Solomon having now decidedly obtained the better of the conflict, and bringing his unwilling rider in high career down to the ford. Never was there anger changed so fast into humane fear, as that of my good companion. "The varlet

"will be drowned!" he exclaimed—"a widow's son!—her only son!—and drowned!—let me go!" And he struggled with me stoically as I hung upon him, to prevent him from plunging into the ford.

I had no fear whatever for Benjie; for the black-guard vermin, though he could not manage the refractory horse, stuck on his seat like a monkey. Solomon and Benjie scrambled through the ford with little inconvenience, and resumed their gallop on the other side.

It was impossible to guess whether on this last occasion Benjie was running off with Solomon, or Solomon with Benjie; but, judging from character and motives, I rather suspected the former. I could not help laughing as the rascal passed me, grinning betwixt terror and delight, perched on the very pommel of the saddle, and holding with extended arms by bridle and mane; while Solomon, the bit secured between his teeth, and his head bowed down betwixt his fore-legs, passed his master in this unwonted guise as hard as he could pelt.

"The mischievous bastard!" exclaimed the Quaker, terrified out of his usual moderation of speech—"the doomed gallows-bird!—he will break Solomon's wind to a certainty."

I prayed him to be comforted—assured him a brushing gallop would do his favourite no harm—and reminded him of the censure he had bestowed on me a minute before, for applying a harsh epithet to the boy.

But Joshua was not without his answer;—"Friend youth," he said, "thou didst speak of the lad's soul, which thou didst affirm belonged to the enemy, and of that thou couldst say nothing of thine own knowledge; on the contrary, I did but speak of his outward man, which will assuredly be suspended by a cord, if he mendeth not his manners. Men say that, young as he is, he is one of the Laird's gang."

"Of the Laird's gang!" said I, repeating the words in surprise—"Do you mean the person with whom I slept last night?—I heard you call him the Laird—is he at the head of a gang?"

"Nay, I meant not precisely a gang," said the Quaker, who appeared in his haste to have spoken more than he intended—"a company, or party; I should have said; but thus it is, friend Latimer, with the wisest men, when they permit themselves to be perturbed with passion, and speak as in a fever, or as with the tongue of the foolish and the forward. And although thou hast been hasty to mark my infirmity, yet I grieve not that thou hast been a witness to it, seeing that the stumbles of the wise may be no less a caution to youth and inexperience, than is the fall of the foolish."

This was a sort of acknowledgment of what I had already begun to suspect—that my new friend's real goodness of disposition, joined to the acquired quietism of his religious sect, had been unable entirely to check the effervescence of a temper naturally warm and hasty.

Upon the present occasion, as if sensible he had displayed a greater degree of emotion than became his character, Joshua avoided farther allusion to Benjie and Solomon, and proceeded to solicit my attention to the natural objects around us, which increased in beauty and interest, as still conducted by the meanders of the brook, we left the common behind us, and entered a more cultivated and enclosed country, where arable and pasture ground was agreeably varied with groves and hedges. De-

scending now almost close to the stream, our course lay through a little gate, into a pathway, kept with great neatness, the sides of which were decorated with trees and flowering shrubs of the hardier species; until, ascending by a gentle slope, we issued from the grove, and stood almost at once in front of a low but very neat building, of an irregular form; and my guide, shaking me cordially by the hand, made me welcome to Mount Sharon.

The wood through which we had approached this little mansion was thrown around it both on the north and north-west, but, breaking off into different directions, was intersected by a few fields well watered and sheltered. The house fronted to the south-east, and from thence the pleasure-ground, or, I should rather say, the gardens, sloped down to the water. I afterwards understood that the father of the present proprietor had a considerable taste for horticulture, which had been inherited by his son, and had formed these gardens, which, with their shaven turf, pleached alleys, wildernesses, and exotic trees and shrubs, greatly excelled any thing of the kind which had been attempted in the neighbourhood.

If there was a little vanity in the complacent smile with which Joshua Geddes saw me gaze with delight on a scene so different from the naked waste we had that day traversed in company, it might surely be permitted to one, who, cultivating and improving the beauties of nature, had found therein, as he said, bodily health, and a pleasing relaxation for the mind. At the bottom of the extended gardens the brook wheeled round in a wide semi-circle, and was itself their boundary. The opposite side was no part of Joshua's domain, but the brook was there skirted by a precipitous rock of limestone, which seemed a barrier of Nature's own erecting around his little Eden of beauty, comfort, and peace.

"But I must not let thee forget," said the kind Quaker, "amidst thy admiration of these beauties of our little inheritance, that thy breakfast has been a light one."

So saying, Joshua conducted me to a small wadded door, opening under a porch amply mantled by honeysuckle and clematis, into a parlour of moderate size; the furniture of which, in plainness and excessive cleanliness, bore the characteristic marks of the sect to which the owner belonged.

Thy father's Hannah is generally allowed to be an exception to all Scottish housekeepers, and stands unparalleled for cleanliness among the women of Auld Reekie; but the cleanliness of Hannah is staidness, compared to the scrupulous purifications of these people, who seem to carry into the minor deceptions of life that conscientious rigour which they affect in their morals.

The parlour would have been gloomy, for the windows were small and the ceiling low; but the present proprietor had rendered it more cheerful by opening one end into a small conservatory, roofed with glass, and divided from the parlour by a partition of the same. I have never before seen this very pleasing manner of uniting the comforts of an apartment with the beauties of a garden, and I wonder it is not more practised by the great. Something of the kind is hinted at in a paper of the Spectator.

As I walked towards the conservatory to view it more closely, the parlour chimney engaged my attention. It was a pile of massive stone, entirely

out of proportion to the size of the apartment. On the front had once been an armorial scutcheon; for the hammer, or chisel, which had been employed to deface the shield or crest, had left uninfected the scroll beneath, which bore the pious motto, "*Trust in God.*" Black-letter, you know, was my early passion, and the tombstones in the Greyfriar's Churchyard early yielded up to my knowledge as a decipherer what little they could tell of the forgotten dead.

Joshua Geddes paused when he saw my eye fixed on this relic of antiquity. "Thou canst read it!" he said.

I repeated the motto, and added, there seemed vestiges of a date.

"It should be 1537," said he; "for so long ago, at the least computation, did my ancestors, in the blinded times of Papistry, possess these lands, and in that year did they build their house."

"It is an ancient descent," said I, looking with respect upon the monument. "I am sorry the arms have been defaced."

It was perhaps impossible for my friends, Quaker as he was, to seem altogether void of respect for the pedigree which he began to recount to me, disclaiming all the while the vanity usually connected with the subject; in short, with the air of mingled melancholy, regret, and conscious dignity, with which Jack Fawkes used to tell us, at College, of his ancestor's unfortunate conjunction with the Gunpowder Plot.

"Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher,"—thus harangued Joshua Geddes of Mount Sharon;—"if we ourselves are nothing in the sight of Heaven, how much less than nothing must be our derivation from rotten bones and mouldering dust, whose immortal spirits have long since gone to their private account! Yes, friend Latimer, my ancestors were renowned among the ravenous and bloodthirsty men who then dwelt in this vexed country; and so much were they famed for successful freebooting, robbery, and bloodshed, that they are said to have been called Geddes, as likening them to the fish called a Jack, Pike, or Luce, and in our country tongue, a *Ged*—a goodly distinction truly for Christian men! Yet did they paint this shark of the fresh waters upon their shields, and these profane priests of a wicked idolatry, the empty boasters called heralds, who make engraven images of fishes, fowls, and fourfooted beasts, that men may fall down and worship them, assigned the *Ged* for the device and escutcheon of my fathers, and hewed it over their chimneys, and placed it above their tombs; and the men were elated in mind, and became yet more God-like, slaying, leading into captivity, and dividing the spoil, until the place where they dwelt obtained the name of Sharing-Knowe, from the booty which was there divided amongst them and their accomplices. But a better judgment was given to my father's father, Philip Geddes, who, after trying to light his candle at some of the vain wild-fires then held aloft at different meetings and steeple-houses, at length obtained a spark from the lamp of the blessed George Fox, who came into Scotland spreading light among darkness, as he himself hath written, as plentifully as fly the sparks from the hoof of the horse which gallops swiftly along the stony road."—Here the good Quaker interrupted himself with, "And that is very true, I must go speedily to see after the condition of Solomon."

A Quaker servant here entered the room with a tray, and inclining his head towards his master, but not after the manner of one who bows, said composedly, "Thou art welcome home, friend Joshua, we expected thee not so early; but what hath befallen Solomon thy horse?"

"What hath befallen him, indeed?" said my friend; "hath he not been returned hither by the child whom they call Benjie?"

"He hath," said his domestic, "but it was after a strange fashion; for he came hither at a swift and furious pace, and flung the child Benjie from his back, upon the heap of dung which is in the stable-yard."

"I am glad of it," said Joshua, hastily,—"glad of it, with all my heart and spirit!—But stay, he is the child of the widow—hath the boy any hurt?"

"Not so," answered the servant, "for he rose and fled swiftly."

Joshua muttered something about a scourge, and then inquired after Solomon's present condition.

"He seetheth like a steaming caldron," answered the servant, "and Bauldie, the lad, walketh him about the yard with a halter, lest he take cold."

Mr Geddes hastened to the stable-yard to view personally the condition of his favourite, and I followed, to offer my counsel as a jockey—Don't laugh, Alan, sure I have jockeyship enough to assist a Quaker—in this displeasing predicament.

The lad who was leading the horse seemed to be no Quaker, though his intercourse with the family had given him a touch of their prim sobriety of look and manner. He assured Joshua that his horse had received no injury, and I even hinted that the exercise would be of service to him. Solomon himself neighed towards his master, and rubbed his head against the good Quaker's shoulder, as if to assure him of his being quite well; so that Joshua returned in comfort to his parlour, where breakfast was now about to be displayed.

I have since learned that the affection of Joshua for his pony is considered as inordinate by some of his own sect; and that he has been much blamed for permitting it to be called by the name of Solomon, or any other name whatever; but he has gained so much respect and influence among them that they overlook these foibles.

I learned from him (whilst the old servant, Jehoiachim, entering and re-entering, seemed to make no end of the materials which he brought in for breakfast) that his grandfather Philip, the convert of George Fox, had suffered much from the persecution to which these harmless devotees were subjected on all sides during that intolerant period, and much of their family estate had been dissipated. But better days dawned on Joshua's father, who, connecting himself by marriage with a wealthy family of Quakers in Lancashire, engaged successfully in various branches of commerce, and redeemed the remnants of the property, changing its name in sense, without much alteration of sound, from the Border appellation of Sharing-Knowe, to the evangelical appellation of Mount Sharon.

This Philip Geddes, as I before hinted, had imbibed the taste for horticulture and the pursuits of the florist, which are not uncommon among the peaceful sect he belonged to. He had destroyed the remnants of the old peel-house, substituting the modern mansion in its place; and while he reserved the hearth of his ancestors, in memory of their

hospitality, as also the pious motto which they had chanced to assume, he failed not to obliterate the worldly and military emblems displayed upon the shield and helmet, together with all their blazonry.

In a few minutes after Mr Geddes had concluded the account of himself and his family, his sister Rachel, the only surviving member of it, entered the room. Her appearance is remarkably pleasing, and although her age is certainly thirty at least, she still retains the shape and motion of an earlier period. The absence of every thing like fashion or ornament was, as usual, atoned for by the most perfect neatness and cleanliness of her dress; and her simple close cap was particularly suited to eyes which had the softness and simplicity of the dove's. Her features were also extremely agreeable, but had suffered a little through the ravages of that professed enemy to beauty, the smallpox; a disadvantage which was in part counterbalanced by a well-formed mouth, teeth like pearls, and a pleasing sobriety of smile, that seemed to wish good here and hereafter to every one she spoke to. You cannot make any of your vile inferences here, Alan, for I have given a full-length picture of Rachel Geddes; so that you cannot say in this case, as in the letter I have just received, that she was passed over as a subject on which I feared to dilate. More of this anon.

Well, we settled to our breakfast after a blessing, or rather an extempore prayer, which Joshua made upon the occasion, and which the spirit moved him to prolong rather more than I felt altogether agreeable. Then, Alan, there was such a despatching of the good things of the morning, as you have not witnessed since you have seen Darsie Latimer at breakfast. Tea and chocolate, eggs, ham, and pastry, not forgetting the broiled fish, disappeared with a celerity which seemed to astonish the good-humoured Quakers, who kept loading my plate with supplies, as if desirous of seeing whether they could, by any possibility, tire me out. One hint, however, I received, which put me in mind where I was. Miss Geddes had offered me some sweet-cake, which, at the moment, I declined; but presently afterwards, seeing it within my reach, I naturally enough helped myself to a slice, and had just deposited it beside my plate, when Joshua, mine host, not with the authoritative air of Sancho's doctor, Tirto Fuera, but in a very calm and quiet manner, lifted it away and replaced it on the dish, observing only, "Thou didst refuse it before, friend Latimer."

These good folks, Alan, make no allowance for what your good father calls the Aberdeen man's privilege, of "taking his word again;" or what the wise call second thoughts.

Having this slight hint, that I was among a precise generation, there was nothing in my reception that was peculiar — unless, indeed, I were to notice the solicitous and uniform kindness with which all the attentions of my new friends were seasoned, as if they were anxious to assure me that the neglect of worldly compliments interdicted by their sect, only served to render their hospitality more sincere. At length my hunger was satisfied, and the worthy Quaker, who, with looks of great good-nature, had watched my progress, thus addressed his sister:—

"This young man, Rachel, hath last night sojourned in the tents of our neighbour, whom men call the Laird. I am sorry I had not met him the evening before, for our neighbour's hospitality is too

unfrequently exercised to be well prepared with the means of welcome."

"Nay, but, Joshua," said Rachel, "if our neighbour hath done a kindness, thou shouldst not grudge him the opportunity; and if our young friend hath fared ill for a night, he will the better relish what Providence may send him of better provisions."

"And that he may do so at leisure," said Joshua, "we will pray him, Rachel, to tarry a day or twain with us: he is young, and is but now entering upon the world, and our habitation may, if he will, be like a resting-place, from which he may look abroad upon the pilgrimage which he must make, and the path which he has to travel. — What sayest thou, friend Latimer? We constrain not our friends to our ways, and thou art, I think, too wise to quarrel with us for following our own fashions; and if we should even give thee a word of advice, thou wilt not, I think, be angry, so that it is spoken in season."

You know, Alan, how easily I am determined by any thing resembling cordiality — and so, though a little afraid of the formality of my host and hostess, I accepted their invitation, provided I could get some messenger to send to Shepherd's Bush for my servant and portmanteau.

"Why, truly, friend," said Joshua, "thy outward frame would be improved by cleaner garments; but I will do thine errand myself to the Widow Gregson's house of reception, and send thy lad hither with thy clothes. Meanwhile, Rachel will shew thee these little gardens, and then will put thee in some way of spending thy time usefully, till our meal calls us together at the second hour after noon. I bid thee farewell for the present, leaving some space to walk, seeing I must leave the animal Solomon to his refreshing rest."

With these words, Mr Joshua Geddes withdrew. Some ladies we have known would have felt, or at least affected, reserve or embarrassment, at being left to do the honours of the grounds to (it will be out, Alan) — a smart young fellow — an entire stranger. She went out for a few minutes, and returned in her plain cloak and bonnet, with her beaver-gloves, prepared to act as my guide, with as much simplicity as if she had been to wait upon thy father. So forth I sallied with my fair Quakeress.

If the house at Mount Sharon be merely a plain and convenient dwelling, of moderate size, and small pretensions, the gardens and offices, though not extensive, might rival an earl's in point of care and expense. Rachel carried me first to her own favourite resort, a poultry-yard, stocked with a variety of domestic fowls, of the more rare as well as the most ordinary kinds, furnished with every accommodation which may suit their various habits. A rivulet which spread into a pool for the convenience of the aquatic birds, trickled over gravel: as it passed through the yards dedicated to the land poultry, which were thus amply supplied with the means they use for digestion.

All these creatures seemed to recognize the presence of their mistress, and some especial favourites hastened to her feet, and continued to follow her as far as their limits permitted. She pointed out their peculiarities and qualities, with the discrimination of one who had made natural history her study; and I own I never looked on barn-door fowls with so much interest before — at least until they were boiled or roasted. I could not help asking the

trying question, how she could order the execution of any of the creatures of which she seemed so careful.

"It was painful," she said, "but it was according to the law of their being. They must die; but they knew not when death was approaching; and in making them comfortable while they lived, we contributed to their happiness as much as the conditions of their existence permitted to us."

I am not quite of her mind, Alan. I do not believe either pigs or poultry would admit that the chief end of their being was to be killed and eaten. However, I did not press the argument, from which my Quaker seemed rather desirous to escape; for, conducting me to the greenhouse, which was extensive, and filled with the choicest plants, she pointed out an aviary which occupied the farther end, where, she said, she employed herself with attending the inhabitants, without being disturbed with any painful recollections concerning their future destination.

I will not trouble you with any account of the various hot-houses and gardens, and their contents. No small sum of money must have been expended in erecting and maintaining them in the exquisite degree of good order which they exhibited. The family, I understood, were connected with that of the celebrated Millar, and had imbibed his taste for flowers, and for horticulture. But instead of murdering botanical natures, I will rather conduct you to the *potager*, or pleasure-garden, which the taste of Joshua or his father, had extended on the banks betwixt the house and river. This also, in contradistinction to the prevailing simplicity, was ornamented in an unusual degree. There were various compartments, the connection of which was well managed, and although the whole ground did not exceed five or six acres, it was so much varied as to seem four times larger. The space contained close alleys and open walks; a very pretty artificial waterfall; a fountain also, consisting of a considerable jet-d'eau, whose streams glittered in the sunbeams, and exhibited a continual rainbow. There was a cabinet of verdure, as the French call it, to cool the summer heat, and there was a terrace sheltered from the north-east by a noble holly hedge, with all its glittering spears, where you might have the full advantage of the sun in the clear frosty days of winter.

I know that you, Alan, will condemn all this as bad and antiquated; for, ever since Dodsley has described the Leasowes, and talked of Brown's imitations of nature, and Horace Walpole's late Essay on Gardening, you are all for simple nature—condemn walking up and down stairs in the open air, and declare for wood and wilderness. But as *quid nimis*. I would not deface a scene of natural grandeur or beauty, by the introduction of crowded artificial decorations; yet such may, I think, be very interesting, where the situation, in its natural state, otherwise has no particular charms.

So that when I have a country-house, (who can say how soon!) you may look for grottoes, and cascades, and fountains; nay, if you vex me by contradiction, perhaps I may go the length of a temple—so provoke me not, for you see of what enormities I am capable.

At any rate, Alan, had you condemned as artificial the rest of Friend Godden's grounds, there is a willow walk by the very verge of the stream, so sad, so

solemn, and so silent, that it must have commanded your admiration. The brook, restrained at the ultimate boundary of the grounds by a natural dam-dike or ledge of rocks, seemed, even in its present swollen state, scarcely to glide along: and the pale willow-trees, dropping their long branches into the stream, gathered around them little coronals of the foam that floated down from the more rapid stream above. The high rock, which formed the opposite bank of the brook, was seen dimly through the branches, and its pale and splintered front, garlanded with long streamers of briars and other creeping plants, seemed a barrier between the quiet path which we trode, and the teeming and bustling world beyond. The path itself, following the sweep of the stream, made a very gentle curve; enough, however, served by its inflection completely to hide the end of the walk, until you arrived at it. A deep and sullen sound; which increased as you proceeded, prepared you for this termination, which was indeed only a plain root-seat, from which you looked on a fall of about six or seven feet, where the brook flung itself over the ledge of natural rock I have already mentioned, which there crossed its course.

The quiet and twilight seclusion of this walk rendered it a fit scene for confidential communing; and having nothing more interesting to say to my fair Quaker, I took the liberty of questioning her about the Laird; for you are, or ought to be, aware, that next to discussing the affairs of the heart, the fair sex are most interested in those of their neighbours.

I did not conceal either my curiosity, or the check which it had received from Joshua, and I saw that my companion answered with embarrassment. "I must not speak otherwise than truly," she said; "and therefore I tell thee, that my brother dislikes, and that I fear, the man of whom thou hast asked me. Perhaps we are both wrong—but he is a man of violence, and hath great influence over many, who, following the trade of sailors and fishermen, become as rude as the elements with which they contend. He hath no certain name among them, which is not, unusual, their rude fashion being to distinguish each other by nicknames; and they have called him the Laird of the Lakes, (not remembering there should be no one called Lord, save one only,) in idle defision; the pools of salt water left by the tide among the sands being called the Lakes of Solway."

"Was he no other revenue than he derives from these sands?" I asked.

"That I cannot answer," replied Rachel; "men say that he wants not money, though he lives like an ordinary fisherman, and that he imparts freely of his means to the poor around him. They intimate that he is a man of consequence, once deeply engaged in the unhappy affair of the rebellion, and even still too much in danger from the government to assume his own name. He is often absent from his cottage at Broken-burn-gliff for weeks and months."

"I should have thought," said I, "that the government would scarce, at this time of day, be likely to proceed against any one even of the most obnoxious rebels. Many years have passed away—"

"It is true," she replied; "yet such persons may understand that their being connived at depends on their living in obscurity. But indeed

there can nothing certain be known among these rude people. The truth is not in them — most of them participate in the unlawful trade betwixt these parts and the neighbouring shore of England; and they are familiar with every species of falsehood and deceit."

"It is a pity," I remarked, "your brother should have neighbours of such a description, especially as I understand he is at some variance with them."

"Where, when, and about what matter?" answered Miss Goddes, with an eager and timorous anxiety, which made me regret having touched on the subject.

I told her, in a way as little alarming as I could devise, the purport of what passed betwixt this Laird of the Lakes and her brother, at their morning's interview.

"You affright me much," answered she; "it is this very circumstance which has scared me in the watches of the night. When my brother Joshua withdrew from an active share in the commercial concerns of my father, being satisfied with the portion of worldly substance which he already possessed, there were one or two undertakings in which he retained an interest, either because his withdrawing might have been prejudicial to friends, or because he wished to retain some mode of occupying his time. Amongst the more important of these, is a fishing station on the coast, where, by certain improved modes of erecting snares, opening at the advance of the tide, and shutting at the reflux, many more fish are taken than can be destroyed by those who, like the men of Broken-burn, use only the boat-net and spear, or fishing-rod. They complain of these tide nets, as men call them, as an innovation, and pretend to a right to remove and destroy them by the strong hand. I fear me, this man of violence, whom they call the Laird, will execute these his threats, which cannot be without both loss and danger to my brother."

"Mr Goddes," said I, "ought to apply to the civil magistrate; there are soldiers at Dunmires who would be detached for his protection."

"Thou speakest, friend Latimer," answered the lady, "as one who is still in the gall of bitterness and boild of iniquity. God forbid that we should endeavour to preserve nets of flax and stakes of wood, or the Mammon of gain which they procure for us, by the hands of men of war, and at the risk of spilling human blood!"

"I respect your scruples," I replied; "but since such is your way of thinking, your brother ought to avert the danger by compromise or submission."

"Perhaps it would be best," answered Rachel; "but what can I say! Even in the best-trained temper there may remain some leaves of the old Adam; and I know not whether it is this or a better spirit that maketh my brother Joshua determine, that though he will not resist force by force, neither will he yield up his right to mere threats, or encourage wrong to others by yielding to menaces. His partners, he says, confide in his steadiness; and that he must not disappoint them by yielding up their right for the fear of the threats of man, whose breath is in his nostrils."

This observation convinced me that the spirit of the old sharers of the spoil was not utterly departed even from the bosom of the peaceful Quaker; and I could not help confessing internally that Joshua

had the right, when he averred that there was as much courage in sufferance as in exertion.

As we approached the farther end of the willow walk, the sullen and continuous sound of the dashing waters became still more and more audible, and at length rendered it difficult for us to communicate with each other. The conversation dropped, but apparently my companion continued to dwell upon the apprehensions which it had excited. At the bottom of the walk, we obtained a view of the cascade, where the swollen brook flung itself in foam and tumult over the natural barrier of rock, which seemed in vain to attempt to bar its course. I gazed with delight, and, turning to express my sentiment to my companion, I observed that she had folded her hands in an attitude of sorrowful resignation, which showed her thoughts were far from the scene which lay before her. When she saw that her abstraction was observed, she resumed her former placidity of manner; and having given me sufficient time to admire this termination of our sober and secluded walk, proposed that we should return to the house through her brother's farm. "Even we Quakers, as we are called, have our little pride," she said; "and my brother Joshua would not forgive me, were I not to show thee the fields which he taketh delight to cultivate, after the newest and best fashion; for which, I promise thee, he hath received much praise from good judges, as well as some ridicule from those who think it folly to improve of the customs of our ancestors."

As she spoke, she opened a low door, leading through a moss and ivy-covered wall, the boundary of the pleasure-ground, into the open fields; through which we moved by a convenient path, leading, with good taste and simplicity, by stile and hedge-row, through pasturage, and arable, and woodland, so that in all ordinary weather, the good man might, without even soiling his shoes, perform his perambulation round the farm. There were seats also, on which to rest; and though not adorned with inscriptions, nor quite so frequent in occurrence as those mentioned in the account of the Leasowes, their situation was always chosen with respect to some distant prospect to be commanded, or some home-view to be enjoyed.

But what struck me most in Joshua's domain, was the quantity and the tameness of the game. The hen partridge scarce abandoned the roost at the foot of the hedge where she had assembled her covey, though the path went close beside her; and the hare, remaining on her form, gazed at us as we passed, with her full dark eye, or rising lazily and hopping to a little distance, stood erect to look at us with more curiosity than apprehension. I observed to Miss Goddes the extreme tameness of these timid and shy animals, and she informed me that their confidence arose from protection in the summer, and relief during the winter.

"They are pets," she said, "of my brother, who considers them as the better entitled to his kindness that they are a race persecuted by the world in general. He dometh himself," she said, "even the company of a dog, that these creatures may here at least enjoy undisturbed security. Yet this harmless or humane propensity, or humour, having given offence," she added, "to our dangerous neighbours."

She explained this, by telling me that my host of the preceding night was remarkable for his attach-

ment to field-sports, which he pursued without much regard to the wishes of the individuals over whose property he followed them. The unrefined mixture of respect and fear with which he was generally regarded, induced most of the neighbouring landholders to connive at what they would perhaps in another have punished as a trespass; but Joshua Geddes would not permit the intrusion of any one upon his premises, and as he had before offended several country neighbours, who, because he would neither shoot himself nor permit others to do so, compared him to the dog in the manger, so he now aggravated the displeasure which the Laird of the Lakes had already conceived against him, by positively debarring him from pursuing his sport over his grounds — "So that," said Rachel Geddes, "I sometimes wish our lot had been cast elsewhere than in these pleasant borders, where, if we had less of luxury around us, we might have had a neighbourhood of peace and good-will."

We at length returned to the house, where Miss Geddes shewed me a small study, containing a little collection of books, in two separate presses.

"These," said she, pointing to the smaller press, "will, if thou bestowest thy leisure upon them, do thee good; and these," pointing to the other and larger cabinet, "can, I believe, do thee little harm. Some of our people do indeed hold, that every writer who is not with us is against us; but brother Joshua is mitigated in his opinions, and corresponds with our friend John Scot of Amwell, who hath himself constructed verses well approved of even in the world. I wish thee many good thoughts till our family meet at the hour of dinner."

Left alone, I tried both collections; the first consisted entirely of religious and controversial tracts, and the latter formed a small selection of history, and of sagal writers, both in prose and verse.

Neither collection promising much amusement, thou hast, in these close pages, the fruits of industry; and truly, I think, writing history (one's self being the subject) is as amusing as reading that of foreign countries, at any time.

Sam, still more drunk than sober, arrived in due time with my portmanteau, and enabled me to put my dress into order, better befitting this temple of cleanliness and decorum, where (to conclude) I believe I shall be a sojourner for more days than one.

P.S.—I have noted your adventure, as you home-bred youths may perhaps term it, concerning the visit of your doughty Laird. We travellers hold such an incident of no great consequence, though it may serve to embellish the uniform life of Brown's Square. But art thou not ashamed to attempt to interest one who is seeing the world at large, and studying human nature on a large scale, by so bald a narrative? Why, what does it amount to, after all, but that a Tory Laird dined with a Whig Lawyer? no very uncommon matter, especially as you state Mr Herries to have lost the estate, though retaining the designation. The Laird behaves with haughtiness and impertinence — nothing out of character in that: is not kicked down stairs, as he ought to have been; were Alan Fairford half the man that he would wish his friends to think him. — Ay, but then, as the young lawyer, instead of shewing his friend the door, chose to

make use of it himself, he overheard the Laird aforesaid ask the old lawyer concerning Darsie Latimer — no doubt earnestly inquiring after the handsome, accomplished inmate of his family, who has so lately made Themis his bow, and declined the honour of following her farther. You laugh at me for my air-drawn castles; but confess, have they not surer footing, in general, than two words spoken by such a man as Herries? And yet — and yet — I would rally the matter off, Alan; but in dark nights, even the glow-worm becomes an object of lustre, and to one plunged in my uncertainty and ignorance, the slightest gleam that promises intelligence, is interesting. My life is like the subterranean river in the Peak of Derby, visible only where it crosses the celebrated cavern. I am here, and this much I know; but where I have sprung from, or whether my course of life is like to tend, who shall tell me! Your father, too, seemed interested and alarmed, and talked of writing; would to Heaven he may! — I send daily to the post-town for letters.

LETTER VIII.

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARSIE LATIMER.

Thou mayst clap thy wings and crow as thou pleasest. You go in search of adventures, but adventures come to me unsought for; and oh! in what a pleasing shape came mine, since it arrived in the form of a client — and a fair client to boot! What think you of that, Darsie, you who are such a sworn squire of dames! Will this not match my adventures with thine, that hunt salmon on horseback, and will it not, besides, eclipse the history of a whole tribe of Broadbrims! — but I must proceed methodically.

When I returned to-day from the College, I was surprised to see a broad grin distending the adult countenance of the faithful James Wilkinson, which, as the circumstance seldom happens above once a-year, was matter of some surprise. Moreover, he had a knowing glance with his eye, which I should have as soon expected from a dumb-waiter — an article of furniture to which James, in his usual state, may be happily assimilated. "What the devil is the matter, James?"

"The devil may be in the matter, for aught I ken," said James, with another provoking grin; "for here has been a woman calling for you, Maister Alan."

"A woman calling for me?" said I in surprise: for you know well, that excepting old Aunt Peggy, who comes to dinner of a Sunday, and the still older Lady Bedrooket, who calls ten times a-year for the quarterly payment of her jointure of four hundred merks, a female scarce approaches our threshold, as my father visits all his female clients at their own lodgings. James protested, however, that there had been a lady calling, and for me. "As bonny a lass as I have seen," added James, "since I was in the Fusiliers; and kept company with Peg Baxter." Thou knowest all James's gay recollections go back to the period of his military service, the years he has spent in ours having probably been dull enough.

"Did the lady leave no name nor place of address?"

"No," replied James; "but she asked when you had been at home, and I appointed her for twelve o'clock, when the house was to be quiet, and your father at the Bank."

"For shame, James! how can you think my father's being at home or abroad could be of consequence?—The lady is of course a decent person?"

"I've uphanded her that, sir—she is name of your *cher*"—[Here James supplied a blank with a low whistle]—"but I didna ken—my maister makes an unco wark if a woman comes here."

I passed into my own room, not ill-pleased that my father was absent, notwithstanding I had thought it proper to rebuke James for having so contrived it. I disarranged my books, to give them the appearance of a graceful confusion on the table, and laying my foils (useless since your departure) across the mantelpiece, that the lady might see I was *tam Marte quam Mercurio*—I endeavoured to dispose my dress so as to resemble an elegant morning dishabille—gave my hair the general shade of powder which marks the gentleman—laid my watch and seals on the table, to hint that I understood the value of time;—and when I had made all these arrangements, of which I am a little ashamed when I think of them, I had nothing better to do than to watch the dial-plate till the index pointed to noon. Five minutes elapsed, which I allowed for variation of clocks—five minutes more rendered me anxious and doubtful—--and five minutes more would have made me impatient.

Laugh as thou wilt; but remember, Darsie, I was a lawyer, expecting his first client—a young man, how strictly bred up I need not remind you, expecting a private interview with a young and beautiful woman. But ere the third term of five minutes had elapsed, the door-bell was heard to tinkle low and modestly, as if touched by some timid hand.

James Wilkinson, swift in nothing, is, as thou knowest, peculiarly slow in answering the door-bell; and I reckoned on five minutes' good, ere his solemn step should have ascended the stair. Time enough, thought I, for a peep through the blinds, and was hastening to the window accordingly. But I reckoned without my host; for James, who had his own curiosity as well as I, was lying *perdu* in the lobby, ready to open at the first tinkle; and there was, "This way, ma'am—Yes, ma'am—The lady, Mr Alan," before I could get to the chair in which I proposed to be discovered, seated in all legal dignity. The consciousness of being half caught in the act of peeping, joined to that native air of awkward bashfulness of which I am told the law will soon free me, kept me standing on the floor in some confusion; while the lady, disconcerted on her part, remained on the threshold of the room. James Wilkinson, who had his senses most about him, and was perhaps willing to prolong his stay in the apartment, busied himself in setting a chair for the lady, and recalled me to my good-breeding by the hint. I invited her to take possession of it, and bidd James withdraw.

My visitor was undeniably a lady, and probably considerably above the ordinary rank—very modest, too, judging from the mixture of grace and timidity with which she moved, and at my entreaty

sat down. Her dress was, I should suppose, both handsome and fashionable; but it was much concealed by a walking-cloak of green silk, fancifully embroidered; in which, though heavy for the season, her person was enveloped, and which, moreover, was furnished with a hood.

The devil take that hood, Darsie! for I was just able to distinguish that, pulled as it was over the face, it concealed from me, as I was convinced, one of the prettiest countenances I have seen, and which, from a sense of embarrassment, seemed to be crimsoned with a deep blush. I could see her complexion was beautiful—her chin finely turned—her lips coral—and her teeth rivals to ivory. But farther the deponent sayeth not; for a clasp of gold, ornamented with a sapphire, closed the envious mantle under the incognita's throat, and the cursed hood concealed entirely the upper part of the face.

I ought to have spoke first, that is certain; but ere I could get my phrases well arranged, the young lady, rendered desperate, I suppose, by my hesitation, opened the conversation herself.

"I fear I am an intruder, sir—I expected to meet an elderly gentleman."

This brought me to myself. "My father, madam, perhaps. But you inquired for Alan Fairford—my father's name is Alexander."

"It is Mr Alan Fairford, undoubtedly, with whom I wished to speak," she said, with greater confusion; "but I was told that he was advanced in life."

"Some mistake, madam, I presume, betwixt my father and myself—our Christian names have the same initials, though the terminations are different. — I — I — I would esteem it a most fortunate mistake if I could have the honour of supplying my father's place in any thing that could be of service to you."

"You are very obliging, sir." A pause, during which she seemed undetermined whether to rise or sit still.

"I am just about to be called to the bar, madam," said I, in hopes to remove her scruples to open her case to me; "and if my advice or opinion could be of the slightest use, although I cannot presume to say that they are much to be depended upon, yet —"

The lady arose. "I am truly sensible of your kindness, sir; and I have no doubt of your talents. I will be very plain with you—it is to you whom I came to visit; although, now that we have met, I find it will be much better that I should commit my communication to writing."

"I hope, madam, you will not be so cruel—so tantalizing, I would say. Consider, you are my first client—your business my first consultation—do not do me the displeasure of withdrawing your confidence because I am a few years younger than you seem to have expected—My attention shall make amends for my want of experience."

"I have no doubt of either," said the lady, in a grave tone, calculated to restrain the air of gallantry with which I had endeavoured to address her. "But when you have received my letter, you will find good reasons assigned why a written communication will best suit my purposes. I wish you, sir, a good morning." And she left the apartment, her poor baffled counsel scraping, and bowing, and apologizing for any thing that might have

been disagreeable to her, although the front of my offence seems to be my having been discovered to be younger than my father.

The door was opened — out she went — walked along the pavement, turned down the close, and put the sun, I believe, into her pocket when she disappeared, so suddenly did dulness and darkness sink down on the square, when she was no longer visible. I stood for a moment as if I had been senseless, not recollecting what a fund of entertainment I must have supplied to our watchful friends on the other side of the green. Then it darted on my mind that I might dog her, and ascertain at least who or what she was. Off I set — ran down the close, where she was no longer to be seen, and demanded of one of the dyer's lads whether he had seen a lady go down the close, or had observed which way she turned.

"A leddy!" — said the dyer, staring at me with his rainbow countenance. "Mr Alan, what takes you out, running like daft, without your hat?"

"The devil take my hat!" answered I, running back, however, in quest of it; snatched it up, and again sallied forth. But as I reached the head of the close once more, I had sense enough to recollect that all pursuit would be now in vain. Besides, I saw my friend, the journeyman dyer, in close confabulation with a pea-green personage of his own profession, and was conscious, like Scrub, that they talked of me, because they laughed consumedly. I had no mind, by a second sudden appearance, to confirm the report that Advocate Fairford was "gaen daft," which had 'probably spread from Campbell's close-foot to the Meatmarket Stairs; and so slunk back within my own hole again.

My first employment was to remove all traces of that elegant and fanciful disposition of my effects, from which I had hoped for so much credit; for I was now ashamed and angry at having thought an instant upon the mode of receiving a visit which had commenced so agreeably, but terminated in a manner so unsatisfactory. I put my folios in their places — threw the foils into the dressing-closet — tormenting myself all the while with the fruitless doubt, whether I had missed an opportunity or escaped a stratagem, or whether the young person had been really startled, as she seemed to intimate, by the extreme youth of her intended legal adviser. The mirror was not unnaturally called in to aid; and that cabinet-counsellor pronounced me rather short, thick-set, with a cast of features fitter, I trust, for the bar than the ball — not handsome enough for blushing virgins to pine for my sake, or even to invent sham cases to bring them to my chambers — yet not ugly enough either to scare those away who came on real business — dark, to be sure, but — *nigri sunt hyacinthi* — there are pretty things to be said in favour of that complexion.

At length — as common sense will get the better in all cases, when a man will but give it fair play — I began to stand convicted in my own mind, as an ass before the interview, for having expected too much — an ass during the interview, for having failed to extract the lady's real purpose — and an especial ass, now that it was over, for thinking so much about it. But I can think of nothing else, and therefore I am determined to think of this to some good purpose.

You remember Murtough O'Hara's defence of the Catholic doctrine of confession; because, "by

his soul, his sins were always a great burden to his mind, till he had told them to the priest; and once confessed, he never thought more about them." I have tried his receipt, therefore; and having poured my secret mortification into thy trusty ear, I will think no more about this maid of the mist,

"Who, with no face, as 'twere, outfaced me."

— four o'clock.

Plague on her green mantle, she can be nothing better than a fairy; she keeps possession of my head yet! All during dinner time I was terribly absent; but, luckily, my father gave the whole credit of my reverie to the abstract nature of the doctrine, *Vineo vincentem, ergo vinco te*; upon which broad of law the Professor this morning lectured. So I got an early dismissal to my own crib, and here am I studying, in one sense, *vinco vincentem*, to get the better of the silly passion of curiosity — I think — I think it amounts to nothing else — which has taken such possession of my imagination, and is perpetually worrying me with the question — will she write or no! She will not — she will not! — So says Reason, and adds, Why should she take the trouble to enter into correspondence with one, who, instead of a bold, alert, prompt gallant, proved a chicken-hearted boy, and left her the whole awkwardness of explanation, which he should have met half-way! But then, says Fancy, she will write, for she was not a bit thing sort of person whom you, Mr Reason, in your wisdom, take her to be. She was disconcerted enough, without my adding to her distress by any impudent conduct on my part. And she will write, for — By Heaven, she has written, Darsie, and with a vengeance! — Here is her letter, thrown into the kitchen by a cadie, too faithful to be bribed, either by money or whisky, to say more than that he received it, with sixpence, from an ordinary-looking woman, as he was plying on his station near the Cross.

"FOR ALAN FAIRFORD, ESQUIRE, BARRISTER."

"SIR,

"Excuse my mistake of to-day. I had accidentally learnt that Mr Darsie Latimer had an intimate friend and associate in Mr A. Fairford. When I inquired for such a person, he was pointed out to me at the Cross, (as I think the Exchange of your city is called,) in the character of a respectable elderly man — your father, as I now understand. On inquiry at Braden's Square, where I understood he resided, I used the full name of Alan, which naturally occasioned you the trouble of this day's visit. Upon further inquiry, I am led to believe that you are likely to be the person most active in the matter to which I am now about to direct your attention; and I regret much that circumstances, arising out of my own particular situation, prevent my communicating to you personally what I now apprise you of in this manner.

"Your friendly Mr Darsie Latimer, is in a situation of considerable danger. You are doubtless aware, that he has been cautioned not to trust himself in England — Now, if he has not absolutely transgressed this friendly injunction, he has at least approached as nearly to the menaced danger as he

could do, consistently with the letter of the prohibition. He has chosen his abode in a neighbourhood very perilous to him; and it is only by a speedy return to Edinburgh, or at least by a removal to some more remote part of Scotland, that he can escape the machinations of those whose enmity he has to fear. I must speak in mystery, but my words are not the less certain; and, I believe, you know enough of your friend's fortunes to be aware, that I could not write this much without being even more intimate with them than you are.

"If he cannot, or will not, take the advice here given, it is my opinion that you should join him, if possible, without delay, and urge, by your personal presence and entreaty, the arguments which may prove ineffectual in writing. One word more, and I implore of your candour to take it as it is meant. No one supposes that Mr Fairfield's zeal in his friend's service needs to be quickened by mercenary motives. But report says, that Mr Alan Fairfield not having yet entered on his professional career, may, in such a case as this, want the means, though he cannot want the inclination, to act with profitableness. The enclosed note, Mr Alan Fairfield must be pleased to consider as his first professional employment; and she who sends it hopes it will be the omen of unbounded success, though the fee comes from a hand so unknown as that of GREEN MANTLE."

A bank note of £20 was the enclosure, and the whole incident left me speechless with astonishment. I am not able to read over the beginning of my own letter, which forms the introduction to this extraordinary communication. I only know that, though mixed with a quantity of foolery, (God knows very much different from my present feelings,) it gives an account sufficiently accurate, of the mysterious person from whom this letter comes, and that I have neither time nor patience to separate the absurd commentary from the text, which it is so necessary you should know.

Combine this warning, so strangely conveyed, with the caution impressed on you by your London correspondent, Griffiths, against your visiting England — with the character of your Laird of the Solway Lakes — with the lawless habits of the people on that frontier country, where warrants are not easily executed, owing to the jealousy entertained by either country of the legal interference of the other; remember, that even Sir John Fielding said to my father, that he could never trace a rogue beyond the Briggend of Dumfries — think that the distinctions of Whig and Tory, Papist and Protestant, still keep that country in a loose and comparatively lawless state — think of all this, my dearest Dariae, and remember that, while at this Mount Sharon of yours, you are residing with a family actually menaced with forcible interference, and who, while their obstinacy provokes violence, are by principle bound to abstain from resistance.

May, let me tell you, professionally, that the legality of the mode of fishing practised by your friend Joshua, is greatly doubted by our best lawyers; and that, if the stake-net be considered as actually an unlawful obstruction raised in the channel of the estuary, an assembly of persons who shall proceed, *vis facti*, to pull down and destroy them, would not, in the eye of the law, be esteemed guilty of a riot. So, by remaining where you are, you are

likely to be engaged in a quarrel with which you have nothing to do, and thus to enable your enemies, whoever these may be, to execute, amid the confusion of a general hubbub, whatever designs they may have against your personal safety. Blackfishes, punchers, and smugglers, are a sort of gentry that will not be much checked, either by your Quaker's texts, or by your chivalry. If you are Don Quixote enough to lay lance in rest, in defence of those of the stake-net, and of the sad coloured garment, I pronounce you but a lost knight; for, as I said before, I doubt if these potent redressers of wrongs, the justices and constables, will hold themselves warranted to interfere. In a word, return, my dear Amadis; the adventure of the Solway-nets is not reserved for your worship. Come back, and I will be your faithful Sancho Pansa upon a more hopeful quest. We will beat about together, in search of this Urganda, the Unknown Sis of the Green Mantle, who can read this, the riddle of thy fate, better than wise Eppie of Buckhaven, or Cassandra herself.

I would fain trifle, Dariae; for, in debating with you, jests will sometimes go farther than arguments; but I am sick at heart and cannot keep the ball up. If you have a moment's regard for the friendship we have so often vowed to each other, let my wishes for once prevail over your own venturesome and romantic temper. I am quite serious in thinking, that the information communicated to my father by this Mr Herries, and the admonitory letter of the young lady, bear upon each other; and that, were you here, you might learn something from one or other, or from both, that might throw light on your birth and parentage. You will not, surely, prefer an idle whim to the prospect which is thus held out to you?

I would, agreeably to the hint I have received in the young lady's letter, (for I am confident that such is her equidation,) have ere now been with you to urge these things, instead of pouring them out upon paper. But you know that the day for my trials is appointed; I have already gone through the form of being introduced to the examiners, and have gotten my titles assigned me. All this should not keep me at home, but my father would view any irregularity upon this occasion as a mortal blow to the hopes which he has cherished most fondly during his life; viz. my being called to the bar with some credit. For my own part, I know there is no great difficulty in passing these formal examinations, else how have some of our acquaintances got through them? But, to my father, these formalities compose an august and serious solemnity, to which he has long looked forward, and my absencing myself at this moment would well-nigh drive him distracted. Yet I shall go altogether distracted myself, if I have not in instant assurance from you that you are hastening hither — Meanwhile I have desired Hannah to get your little crib into the best order possible. I cannot learn that my father has yet written to you; nor has he spoken more of his communication with Mrs. Brewster; but when I let him have some inkling of the dangers you are at present incurring, I know my request that you will return immediately, will have his cordial support.

¹ Well known in the *Chap-Book*, called the History of Th. & H. have.

Another reason yet—I must give a dinner, as usual, upon my admission, to our friends; and my father, laying aside all his usual considerations of economy, has desired it may be in the best style possible. Come hither then, dear Darsie! or, I protest to you, I shall send examination, admission-dinner, and guests, to the devil, and come, in person, to fetch you with a vengeance. Thine, in much anxiety,
A. F.

LETTER IX.

ALEXANDER FAIRFORD, W.S., TO MR DARSIE LATIMER.

DEAR MR DARSIE,

HAVING BEEN your *factor loco tutoris*, or rather, I ought to say, in correctness, (since I acted without warrant from the Court,) your *negotiorum gestor*; that connection occasions my present writing. And although having rendered an account of my intrusions, which have been regularly approved of, not only by yourself, (whom I could not prevail upon to look at more than the docket and sum total,) but also by the worthy Mr Samuel Griffiths of London, being the hand through whom the remittances were made, I may, in some sense, be considered as to *functus officio*; yet, to speak facetiously, I trust you will not hold me accountable as a vicious intruder, should I still consider myself as occasionally interested in your welfare. My motives for writing, at this time, are twofold.

I have met with a Mr Herries of Birrenswork, a gentleman of very ancient descent, but who hath in time past been in difficulties, nor do I know if his affairs are yet well redd. Birrenswork says, that he believes he was, very familiar with your father, whom he states to have been called Ralph Latimer of Langcote-Hull, in Westmoreland; and he mentioned family affairs, which it may be of the highest importance to you to be acquainted with; but as he seemed to decline communicating them to me, I could not civilly urge him thereanent. Thus much I know, that Mr Herries had his own share in the late desperate and unhappy matter of 1748, and was in trouble about it, although that is probably now over. Moreover, although he did not profess the Popish religion openly, he had an eye that way. And both of these are reasons why I have hesitated to recommend him to a youth who maybe hath not altogether so well founded his opinions concerning Kirk and State, that they might not be changed by some sudden wind of doctrine. For I have observed ye, Master Darsie, to be rather tinctured with the old leaven of prelacy—this under your leave; and although God forbid that you should be in any manner disaffected to the Protestant Hanoverian line, yet ye have ever loved to hear the blawing, blawing stories which the Highland gentlemen tell of those troublous times, which, if it were their will, they had better pretermit, as tending rather to shame than to honour. It is come to me also by a side-wind, as I may say, that you have been neighbouring more than was needful among some of the pestilent sect of Quakers—a people who own neither priest, nor king, nor civil magistrate, nor the fabric of our law, and will not depone either in civilibus or criminalibus, be the loss to the kiegis what it may. Aneit which heresies, it were

good ye read “the Snake in the Grass,” or, “the Foot out of the Snare,” being both well-approved tracts, touching these doctrines.

Now, Mr Darsie, ye are to judge for yourself whether ye can safely to your soul’s weal remain longer among these Papists and Quakers; these defections on the right hand, and fallings away on the left; and truly if you can confidently resist these evil examples of doctrine, I think ye may as well tarry in the bounds where ye are, until you see Mr Herries of Birrenswork, who does assuredly know more of your matters than I thought had been communicated to any man in Scotland. I would fain have precognosed him myself on these affairs, but found him unwilling to speak out, as I have partly intimated before.

To call a new cause—I have the pleasure to tell you, that Alan has passed his private Scots Law examinations with good approbation—a great relief to my mind; especially as worthy Mr Pest told me in my ear there was no fear of “the callant,” as he familiarly called him, which gives me great heart. His public trials, which are nothing in comparison save a mere form, are to take place, by order of the Honourable Dean of Faculty, on Wednesday first; and on Friday he puts on the gown, and gives a bit chack of dinner to his friends and acquaintances, as is, you know, the custom. Your company will be wished for there, Master Darsie, by more than him, which I regret to think is impossible to have, as well by your engagements, as that our cousin, Peter Fairford, comes from the West on purpose, and we have no place to offer him but your chamber in the wall. And, to be plain with you, after my use and wont, Master Darsie, it may be as well that Alan and you do not meet till he is hefted as it were to his new calling. You are a pleasant gentleman, and full of daffing, which may well become you, as you have enough (as I understand) to uphold your merry humour. If you regard the matter wisely, you would perchance consider that a man of substance should have a douce and staid demeanour; yet you are so far from growing grave and considerate with the increase of your annual income, that the richer you become, the merrier I think you grow. But this must be at your own pleasure, so far as you are concerned. Alan, however, (overpassing my small savings,) has the world to win; and louping and laughing, as you and he were wont to do, would soon snake the powder fleec out of his wig, and the pence out of his pocket. Nevertheless, I trust you will meet when you return from your rambles; for there is a time, as the wise man sayeth, for gathering, and a time for casting away; it is always the part of a man of sense to take the gathering time first. I remain, dear sir, your well-wishing friend, and obedient to command,

ALEXANDER FAIRFORD.

P.S.—Alan’s Thesis is upon the title *De periculo et commodis rei venditæ*, and is a very pretty piece of Latinity.—Rons-House, in our neighbourhood, is nearly finished, and is thought to excel Duff-House in opature.

LETTER X.

DARIE LATIMER TO ALAN FAIRFORD.

THE plot thickens, Alan. I have your letter, and also one from your father. The last makes it impossible for me to comply with the kind request which the former urges. No—I cannot be with you, Alan; and that, for the best of all reasons—I cannot and ought not to counteract your father's anxious wishes. I do not take it unkind of him that he desires my absence. It is natural that he should wish for his son what his son so well deserves—the advantage of a wiser and steadier companion than I seem to him. And yet I am sure I have often laboured hard enough to acquire that decency of demeanour which can no more be suspected of breaking bounds, than an owl of catching a butterfly.

But it was in vain that I have knitted my brows till I had the headache, in order to acquire the reputation of a grave, solid, and well-judging youth. Your father always has discovered, or thought that he discovered, a harebrained eccentricity lying folded among the wrinkles of my forehead which rendered me a periods associate for the future counsellor and ultimate judge. Well, Corporal Nym's philosophy must be my comfort—"Things must be as they may."—I cannot come to your father's house, where he wishes not to see me; and as to your coming hither,—by all that is dear to me, I vow that if you are guilty of such a piece of reckless folly—not to say undutiful cruelty, considering your father's thoughts and wishes—I will never speak to you again as long as I live! I am perfectly serious. And besides, your father, while he in a manner prohibits me from returning to Edinburgh, gives me the strongest reasons for continuing a little while longer in this country, by holding out the hope that I may receive from your old friend, Mr Herries of Birrenswark, some particulars concerning my origin, with which that ancient recusant seems to be acquainted.

That gentleman mentioned the native of a family in Westmoreland, with which he supposes me connected. My inquiries here after such a family have been ineffectual, for the borderers, on either side, know little of each other. But I shall doubtless find some English person of whom to make inquiries, since the confounded fetterlock clapped on my movements by old Griffiths, prevents me, repairing to England in person. At least, the prospect of obtaining some information as greater here than elsewhere; it will be an apology for my making a longer stay in this neighbourhood, a line of conduct which seems to have your father's sanction, whose opinion must be sounder than that of your wandering damocles.

If the road were paved with dangers which leads to such a discovery, I cannot for a moment hesitate to tread it. But in fact there is no peril in the case. If the Tritons of the Solway shall proceed to pull down honest Joshua's tide-net, I am neither Quixote enough in disposition, nor Goliath enough in person, to attempt their protection. I have no idea of attempting to prep a falling house, by putting my shoulders against it. And indeed, Joshua gave me a hint, that the company which he belongs to, injured in the way threatened, (some

of them being men who thought after the fashion of the world,) would pursue the rioters at law, and recover damages, in which probably his own ideas of non-resistance will not prevent his participating. Therefore the whole affair will take its course as law will, as I only mean to interfere when it may be necessary to direct the course of the plaintiffs to thy chambers; and I request they may find these intimate with all the Scottish statutes concerning salmon-fisheries, from the *Lex Aquarum*, downward.

As for the Lady of the Mantle, I will lay a wager that the sun so bedazzled thine eyes on that memorable morning, that every thing thou didst look upon seemed green; and notwithstanding James Wilkinson's experience in the fusileers, as well as his negative whistle, I will venture to hold a crown that she is but a what-shall-call-'um after all. Let not even the gold persuade you to the contrary. She may make a shift to cause you to disgorge that, and (immense spoil!) a session's fees to boot, if you look not all the sharper about you. Or if it should be otherwise, and if indeed there lurk some mystery under this visitation, credit me, it is one which thou canst not penetrate, nor can I as yet even attempt to explain it; since, if I prove mistaken, and mistaken I may easily be, I would be fain to creep into Phalaris's bull, were it standing before me ready heated, rather than be roasted with thy railleury. Do not tax me with want of confidence, for the instant I can throw any light on the matter thou shalt have it; but while I am only blundering about in the dark, I do not choose to call wise folks to see me, perchance, break my nose against a post. So if you marvel at this,

"E'en marvel on till time makes all things plain."

In the meantime, kind Alan, let me proceed in my diurnal.

On the third or fourth day after my arrival at Mount Sharon, Time, that bald sexton to whom I have just referred you, did certainly limp more heavily along with me than he had done at first. The quaint morality of Joshua, and Illeguonot simplicity of his sister, began to lose much of their raciness with their novelty, and my mode of life, by dint of being very quiet, began to feel abominably dull. It was, as thou say'st, as if the Quakers had put the sun in their pockets—all around was soft and mild, and even pleasant; but there was, in the whole routine, a uniformity, a want of interest, a helpless and hopeless languor, which rendered life insipid. No doubt, my worthy host and hostess felt none of this void, this want of excitement, which was becoming oppressive to their guest. They had their little round of occupations, charities, and pleasures; Rachel had her poultry-yard and conservatory, and Joshua his garden. Besides this, they enjoyed, doubtless, their devotional meditations; and, on the whole, time glided softly and imperceptibly on with them, though to me, who long for stream and cataract, it seemed absolutely to stand still. I meditated returning to Shepherd's Bush, and began to think, with some hankering, after little Benjie and the rod. The imp had ventured hither, and hovered about to catch a peep of me now and then; I suppose the little sharper is angling for a few more sixpences. But this would have been, in Joshua's eyes, a return of the washed sow to wallowing in the mire.

and I resolved, while I remained his guest, to spare him so violent a shock to his prejudices. The next point was, to shorten the time of my proposed stay; but, alas! that I felt to be equally impossible. I had named a week; and however rashly my promise had been pledged, it must be held sacred, even according to the letter, from which the Friends permit no deviation.

All these considerations wrought me up to a kind of impatience yesterday evening; so that I snatched up my hat, and prepared for a sally beyond the cultivated farm and ornamented grounds of Mount Sharon, just as if I were desirous to escape from the restraints of art, into those of free and unconstrained nature.

I was scarcely more delighted when I first entered this peaceful demesne, than I now was,—such is the instability and inconsistency of human nature!—when I escaped from it to the open downs, which had formerly seemed so waste and dreary. The air I breathed felt purer and more bracing. The clouds, riding high upon a summer breeze, drove, in gay succession, over my head; now obscuring the sun, now letting its rays stream in transient flashes upon various parts of the landscape, and especially upon the broad mirror of the distant Firth of Solway.

I advanced on the scene with the light step of a liberated captive; and, like John Bunyan's Pilgrim, could have found in my heart to sing as I went on my way. It seemed as if my gaiety had accumulated while suppressed, and that I was, in my present joyous mood, entitled to expend the savings of the previous week. But just as I was about to uplift a merry stave, I heard, to my joyful surprise, the voices of three or more choristers, singing, with considerable success, the lively old catch,

"For all our men were very very merry,
And all our men were drinking;
There were two men of mine,
Three men of thine,
And three that belonged to old Sir Thom o' Lyne;
As they went to the ferry, they were very very merry,
And all our men were drinking."

As the chorus ended, there followed a loud and hearty laugh by way of cheers. Attracted by sounds which were so congenial to my present feelings, I made towards the spot from which they came,—cautiously however, for the downs, as had been repeatedly hinted to me, had no good name; and the attraction of the music, without rivalling that of the Syrens in melody, might have been followed by similarly inconvenient consequences to an incautious amateur.

I crept on, therefore, trusting that the sinuosities of the ground, broken as it was into knolls and sand-pits, would permit me to obtain a sight of the musicians before I should be observed by them. As I advanced, the old ditty was again raised. The voices seemed those of a man and two boys; they were rough, but kept good time, and were managed with too much skill to belong to the ordinary country people.

"Jack looked at the sun, and cried, Fire, fire, fire;
Tom stabled his kelpie in Birkdale mire;
Ilan started a calf, and halloo'd for a stag;
Will mounted a gate-post instead of his nag."

See Note G. "For all our men," &c

For all our men were very very merry,
And all our men were drinking;
There were two men of mine,
Three men of thine,
And three that belonged to old Sir Thom o' Lyne;
As they went to the ferry, they were very very merry
For all our men were drinking."

The voices, as they mixed in their several parts, and ran through them, untwisting and again entwining all the links of the merry old catch, seemed to have a little touch of the bacchanalian spirit which they celebrated, and showed plainly that the musicians were engaged in the same joyous revel as the *menys* of old Sir Thom o' Lyne. At length I came within sight of them, three in number, where they sat cosily niched into what you might call a *bunker*, a little sand-pit, dry and snug, and surrounded by its banks, and a screen of whins in full bloom.

The only one of the trio whom I recognized as a personal acquaintance was the notorious little Benjie, who, having just finished his stave, was cramming a huge luncheon of pie-crust into his mouth with one hand, while in the other he held a foaming tankard, his eyes dancing with all the glee of a forbidden revel; and his features, which have at all times a mischievous archness of expression, confessing the full sweetness of stolen waters, and bread eaten in secret.

There was no mistaking the profession of the male and female, who were partners with Benjie in these merry doings. The man's long loose-bodied great-coat, (wrap-rascal as the vulgar term it,) the fiddle-case, with its straps, which lay beside him, and a small knapsack which might contain his few necessities; a clear gray eye; features which, in contending with many a storm, had not lost a wild and careless expression of glee, animated at present, when he was exercising for his own pleasure the arts which he usually practised for bread,—all announced one of those peripatetic followers of Orpheus, whom the vulgar call a strolling fiddler. Gazing more attentively, I easily discovered that though the poor musician's eyes were open, their sense was shut, and that the ecstasy with which he turned them up to Heaven, only derived its apparent expression from his own internal emotions, but received no assistance from the visible objects around. Beside him sat his female companion, in a man's hat, a blue coat, which seemed adapted to have been an article of male apparel, and a red potticoat. She was cleaner, in person and in clothes, than such itinerants generally are; and, having been in her day a strapping *bona roba*, she did not even yet neglect some attention to her appearance; wore a large amber necklace, and silver ear-rings, and had her plaid fastened across her breast with a brooch of the same metal.

The man also looked clean, notwithstanding the meanness of his attire, and had a decent silk handkerchief well knotted about his throat, under which peeped a clean overlay. His beard, also, instead of displaying a grizzled stubble, unmoved for several days, flowed in thick and comely abundance over the breast, to the length of six inches, and mingled with his hair, which was but beginning to exhibit a touch of age. To sum up his appearance, the loose garment which I have described; was secured around him by a large old-fashioned belt, with brass studs, in which hung a dirk, with a knife and fork, its usual accompaniments. Altogether,

there was something more wild and adventurous-looking about the man, than I could have expected to see in an ordinary modern crowder; and the bow which he now and then drew across the violin, to direct his little choir, was decidedly that of no ordinary performer.

You must understand, that many of these observations were the fruits of after remark; for I had scarce approached so near as to get a distinct view of the party, when my friend Benjie's lurching attendant, which he calls by the appropriate name of Hamp, began to cock his tail and ears, and, sensible of my presence, flew, barking like a fury, to the place where I had meant to lie concealed till I heard another song. I was obliged, however, to jump on my feet, and intimidate Hamp, who would otherwise have bit me, by two sound kicks on the ribs, which sent him howling back to his master.

Little Benjie seemed somewhat dismayed at my appearance; but, calculating on my placability, and remembering, perhaps, that the ill-used Solomon was no paltry of mine, he speedily affected great glee, and almost in one breath assured the itinerants that I was "a grand gentleman, and had plenty of money, and was very kind to poog folk;" and informed me that this was "Willie Stegsonson—Wandering Willie—the best fiddler that ever kitted thairm with horse-hair."

The woman rose and curtsied; and Wandering Willie sanctioned his own praise with a nod, and the ejaculation, "All is true that the little bey says."

I asked him if he was of this country.

"This country!" replied the blind man. "I am of every country in broad Scotland, and a wee bit of England to the boot. But yet I am, in some sense, of this country; for I was born within hearing of the roar of Solway. Will I give your honour a touch of the auld broad-winner?"

He precluded as he spoke, in a manner which really excited my curiosity; and then taking the old tune of Ghilashie for his theme, he graced it with a number of wild, complicated, and beautiful variations; during which, it was wonderful to observe how his sightless face was lighted up under the conscious pride and heartfelt delight in the exercise of his own very considerable powers.

"What think you of that, now, for threescore and twa!"

"I expressed my surprise and pleasure."

"A rant, man—an auld rant," said Willie; "naething like the music ye hae in your ball-houses and your playhouses in Edinbro'; but it's weel anough anes in a way at a dyke-side.—Here's another—it's no a Scotch tune, but it passes for ane—Oswald made it himself! I reckon—he has cheated mony ane, but he canna cheat Wandering Willie."

He then played your favourite air of Roslin Castle, with a number of beautiful variations, some of which I am certain were almost extempore.

"You hae another fiddle there, my friend," said I—"Hae ye a comrade?" But Willie's ears were deaf, or his attention was still busied with the tune.

The female replied in his stead, "O ay, sir—troth we hae a partner—a gangrel body like ourselves. No but my biny might hae been better if he had liked; for mony a bein nook in mony a brow-house has been offered to my hinny Willie, if he wad but just bide still and play to the gentles."

"Whisht, woman! whisht!" said the blind man, angrily, shaking his locks; "dinna deave the gentleman wi' your havers. Stay in a house and play to the gentles!—strike up when my luddy pleasees, and lay down the bow when my lord bids! Na, na, that's nae life for Willie.—Look out, Maggie—poor out, woman, and see if ye can see Robin coming.—De'il be in him! he has got to the lea-side of some smuggler's punch-bowl, and he wouna budge the night, I doubt."

"Thit is your consort's instrument," said I—"Will you give me leave to try my skill?" I slipped at the same time a shilling into the woman's hand.

"I dinna ken whether I dare trust Robin's fiddle to ye," said Willie, bluntly. His wife gave him a twit. "Hout awa, Maggie," he said in contempt of the hint; "though the gentleman may hae girn ye siller, he may hae nae bow-hand for a' that, and I'll no trust Robin's fiddle wi' an ignoramus.—But that's no sae muckle amies," he added, as I began to touch the instrument; "I am thinking ye hae some skill o' the craft."

To confirm him in this favourable opinion, I began to execute such a complicated flourish as I thought must have turned Crowdero into a pillar of stone with envy and wonder. I scaled the top of the finger-board, to dive at once to the bottom—skipped with flying fingers, like Timotheus, from shift to shift—struck arpeggios and harmonic tones, but without exciting any of the astonishment which I had expected.

Willie indeed listened to me with considerable attention; but I was no sooner finished, than he immediately mimicked on his own instrument the fantastic complication of tones which I had produced, and made so whimsical a parody of my performance, that, although somewhat angry, I could not help laughing heartily, in which I was joined by Benjie, whose reverence for me held him under no restraint; while the poor dame, fearful, doubtless, of my taking offence at this familiarity, seemed divided betwixt her conjugal reverence for her Willie, and her desire to give him a hint for his guidance.

At length the old man stopped of his own accord, and, as if he had sufficiently rebuked me by his mimicry, he said, "But for a' that, ye will play very weel wi' a little practice and some gude teaching. But ye maun learn to put the heart into it, man—to put the heart into it."

I played an air in simpler taste, and received more decided approbation.

"That's something like it, man. Od, ye are a clever birkie!"

The woman touched his coat again. "The gentleman is a gentleman, Willie—ye maunna speak that gude to him, hinny."

"The deevil I maunna!" said Willie; "and whitt for maunna I!—If he was ten gentles, he canna draw a bow like me, can he?"

"Indeed I cannot, my honest friend," said I; "and if you will go with me to a house hard by, I would be glad to hae a night with you."

Here I looked round, and observed Benjie smothering a laugh, which I was sure had mischief in it. I seized him suddenly by the ear, and made him confess that he was laughing at the thoughts of the reception which a fiddler was likely to get from the Quakers at Mount Sharon. I chucked him from

me, not sorry that his mirth had reminded me in time of what I had for the moment forgotten; and invited the itinerant to go with me to Shepherd's Bush, from which I proposed to send word to Mr Gidden that I should not return home that evening. But the minstrel declined this invitation also. He was engaged for the night, he said, to a dance in the neighbourhood, and vented a round execration on the laziness or drunkenness of his comrade, who had not appeared at the place of rendezvous.

"I will go with you instead of him," said I, in a sudden whim; "and I will give you a crown to introduce me as your comrade."

"You gang instead of Rob the Rambler! My certie, freend, ye are th blate!" answered Wandering Willie, in a tone which announced death to my frolic.

But Maggie, whom the offer of the crown had not escaped, began to open on that scent with a mauldering sort of lecture: "Oh Willie! hinny Willie, whan will ye learn to be wise! There's a crown to be win for naething but saying ae man's name instead of anither. And, wao's m'd! I hae just a shilling of this gentleman's gicing, and a bottle of my ain; and ye wunna bend your will sae muckle as to take up the siller that's flung at your feet! Ye will die the death of a chldor's powney, in a wreath of drift! and what can I do better than lie down and die wi' you? for ye wunna let me win siller to keep either you or myself l'evin."

"Haud your nonsense tongue, woman," said Willie, but less absolutely than before. "Is he a real gentleman, or ane of the player-men?"

"I se uphaud him a real gentleman!" said the woman.

"I se uphaud ye ken little of the matter," said Willie; "let us see haud of your hand, neebor, gin ye like."

I gave him my hand. He said to himself, "Ay, ay, here are fingers that have seen canny service." Then running his hand over my hair, my face, and my dress, he went on with his soliloquy; "Ay, ay, muisted hair, bridleclath o' the best, and gteenen hundred lincn on his back, at the least o' it. — And how do you think, my braw, birkie, that you are to pass for a tramping fiddler?"

"My dress is plain," said I, — indeed I had chosen my most ordinary suit, out of compliment to my Quaker friends, — "and I can easily pass for a young farmer out upon a frolic. Come, I will double the crown I promised you."

"Damn your crowns!" said the disinterested man of music. "I would like to have a round wi' you, that's certain; — but a farmer, and with a hand that never held plough-stilt or pettle, that will never do. Ye may pass for a trades-lad from Dumfries, or a student upon the ramble, or the like o' that. — But hark ye, lad; if ye expect to be ranting among the queans o' lasses where ye are gann, ye will come by the waur, I can tell ye; for the fishers are wild chaps, and will bide nae taunts."

I promised to be civil and cautious; and, to smooth the good woman, I slipped the promised piece into her hand. The acute organs of the blind man detected this little manoeuvre.

"Are ye at it again wi' the siller, ye jaud! I'll be sworn ye wad rather hear ae twa-penny clink against another, than have a spring from Rory

Dall, if he was coming alive again anes errand. Gang down the gate to Lucky Greggon's and get the things ye want, and bide there till eleven hours in the morn; and if you see Robin, send him on to me."

"Am I no gann to the ploy, then?" said Maggie, in a disappointed tone.

"And what for should ye?" said her lord and master; "to dance a' night, I se warrant, and no to be fit to walk your tae's-length the morn, and we have ten Scots miles afore us! Na, na. Stable the steed, and pit your wife to bed, when there's night wark to do."

"Aweel, aweel, Willie hinnie, ye ken best; but oh, take an unco care o' yoursel, and mind ye haena the blessing o' sight."

"Your tongue gars me whiles tire of the blessing of hearing, woman," replied Willie, in answer to this tender exhortation.

But I now put in for my interest. "Hollo, good folks, remember that I am to send the boy to Mount Sharon, and if you go to the Shepherd's Bush, honest wyman, how the deuce am I to guide the blind man where he is going? I know little or nothing of the country."

"And ye ken mickle less of my hinny, sir," replied Maggie, "that think he needs any guiding; he's the best guide himself, that ye'll find between Criffell and Carlisle. Horse-road and foot-path, parish-road and kirk-road, high-road and cross-road, he kens ilka foot of ground in Nithsdale."

"Ay, ye might have said in braid Scotland, guide-wife," added the fiddler. "But gang your ways, Maggie, that's the first wise word ye hae spoke the day. I wish it was dark night, and rain, and wind, for the gentleman's sake, that I might shew him there is whiles when ane had better want een than have them; for I am as true a guide by darkness as by daylight."

Internally as well pleased that my companion was not put to give me this last proof of his skill, I wrote a note with a pencil, desiring Samuel to bring my horses at midnight, when I thought my frolic would be well-nigh over, to the place to which the bearer should direct him, and I sent little Benjie with an apology to the worthy Quakers.

As we parted in different directions, the good woman said, "Oh, sir, if ye wad but ask Willie to tell ye ane of his tales to shorten the gate! He can speak lik any minister frae the pulpit, and he might have been a minister hanell, but —"

"Haud your tongue, ye fule!" said Willie, — "But stay, Meg — gie me a kiss, we maunna part in anger, neither." — And thus our society separated.

LETTER XI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

You are now to conceive us proceeding in our different directions across the bare downs. You-

1 Blind Rory, a famous musician according to tradition.

2 It is certain that in many cases the blind have, by constant exercise of their other organs, learned to overcome a defect which one would think incapable of being supplied. Every reader must remember the celebrated Blind Jack of Knarborough, who lived by laying out roads.

her flies little Benjie to the northward, with Hemp clumping at his heels, both running as if for dear life, so long as the rogue is within sight of his employer, and certain to take the walk very easy, so soon as he is out of ken. Stepping westward, you see Maggie's tall form and high-crowned hat, relieved by the fluttering of her plaid upon the left shoulder, darkening as the distance diminishes her size, and as the level sunbeams begin to sink upon the sea. She is taking her quiet journey to the Shepherd's Bush.

Then, stoutly striding over the sea, you have a full view of Darsin Latimer, with his new acquaintance, Wandering Willie, who, bating that he touched the ground now and then with his staff, not in a doubtful groping manner, but with the confident air of an experienced pilot, heaving the lead when he has the soundings by heart, walks as firmly and boldly as if he possessed the eyes of Argus. There they go, each with his violin slung at his back, but one of them at least totally ignorant whither their course is directed.

And wherefore did you enter so keenly into such a mad frolic? says my wise counsellor—Why, I think, upon the whole, that as a sense of loneliness, and a longing for that kindness which is interchanged in society, led me to take up my temporary residence at Mount Sharon, the monotony of my life there, the quiet simplicity of the conversation of the Geddases, and the uniformity of their amusements and employments, wearied out my impatient temper, and prepared me for the first escapade which chance might throw in my way.

What would I have given that I could have procured that solemn grave visage of thine, to dignify this joke, as it has done full many a one of thine own! Thou hast so happy a knack of doing the most foolish things in the wisest manner, that thou mightst pass thy extravagancies for rational actions, even in the eyes of Prudence herself.

From the direction which my guide observed, I began to suspect that the dell at Brokenburn was our probable destination; and it became important to me to consider whether I could, with propriety, or even perfect safety, intrude myself again upon the hospitality of my former host. I therefore asked Willie, whether we were bound for the Laird's, as folk called him.

"Do ye ken the Laird?" said Willie, interrupting a sonata of Corelli, of which he had whistled several bars with great precision.

"I know the Laird a little," said I; "and therefore, I was doubting whether I ought to go to his town in disguise."

"I should doubt, not a little only, but a great deal, before I took ye there, my chap," said Wandering Willie; "for I am thinking it wad be worth little less than broken bones baith to you and me. Na, na, chap, we are no ganging to the Laird's, but to a blithe birling at the Brokenburn-foot, where there will be money a braw lad and lass; and maybe there may be some of the Laird's folk, for he never comes to sic spots himself. He is all for fowling-piece and salmon-spear, now that pike and musket are out of the question."

"He has been a soldier, then?" said I.

"I see warrent him a soger," answered Willie; "but take my advice, and speer as little about him as he does about you. Best to let sleeping dogs lie. Better say naething about the Laird, my man, and

tell me instead, what sort of a chap ye are, that are sae ready to cleik in with an auld gaberlunzie fiddler! Maggie says ye're gentle, but a shilling maks a' the difference that Maggie kens, between a gentle and a simple, and your crown wad mak ye a prince of the blood in her een. But I am aye that ken full weel that ye may wear good clathes, and have a saft hand, and yet that may come of idleness as weel as gentrice."

I told him my name, with the same addition I had formerly given to Mr Joshua Geddes; that I was a law-student, tired of my studies, and rambling about for exercise and amusement.

"And are ye in the wont of drawing up wi' a' the gangrel bodies that ye meet on the high-road, or find cowering in a sand-bunker upon the links?" demanded Willie.

"Oh no; only with honest folks like yourself, Willie," was my reply.

"Honest folks like me!—How do ye ken whether I am honest, or what I am!—I may be the deevil himsell for what ye ken; for he has power to come disguised like an angel of light; and besides he is a prime fiddler. He played a sonata to Corelli, ye ken."

There was something odd in this speech, and the tone in which it was said. It seemed as if my companion was not always in his constant mind, or that he was willing to try if he could frighten me. I laughed at the extravagance of his language, however, and asked him in reply, if he was fool enough to believe that the foul fiend would play so silly a masquerade.

"Ye ken little about it—little about it," said the old man, shaking his head and beard, and knitting his brows—"I could tell ye something about that."

What his wife mentioned of his being a tale-teller, as well as a musician, now occurred to me; and as you know I like tales of superstition, I begged to have a specimen of his talent as we went along.

"It is very true," said the blind man, "that when I am tired of scraping thairm or singing ballads, I whiles mak a tale serve the turn among the country bodies; and I have some fearsome ones, that make the auld carlines shake on the settle, and the bits o' bairns skirl on their minnies out frae their beds. But this that I am gae to tell you was a thing that befell in our ain house in my father's time—that is, my father was then a haffins callant; and I tell it to you, that it may be a lesson to you, that are but a young, thoughtless chap, wha ye draw up wi' on a lonely road; for muckle was the d'ol and care that came o't to my gudesire."

He commenced his tale accordingly, in a distinct narrative tone of voice, which he raised and depressed with considerable skill; at times sinking almost into a whisper, and turning his clear but sightless eyeballs upon my face, as if it had been possible for him to witness the impression which his narrative made upon my features. I will not spare you a syllable of it, although it be of the longest; so I make a dash—and begin

Wandering Willie's Tale.

Ye mair have heard of Sir Robert Redgauntlet of that ilk, who lived in these parts before the dear

years. The country-walk long-mind him; and our fathers used to draw breath thick if ever they heard him named. He was out wi' the Highlandmen in Montrose's time; and again he was in the hills wi' Glencairn in the sixteen hundred and fifty-two; and aye when King Charles the Second came in, who was in sic favour as the Laird of Redgauntlet! He was knighted at Lonon court, wi' the King's ain sword; and being a redhot prelatist, he came down here, rampaging like a lion, with commissions of lieutenantancy, (and of lunacy, for what I ken) to put down a' the Whigs and Covenanters in the country. Wild wark they made of it; for the Whigs were as dour as the Cavaliers were fierce, and it was which should first fire the other. Redgauntlet was aye for the strong hand; and his name is kend as wide in the country as Claverhouse's or Tam Dal-yell's. Glen, nor dargle, nor mountain, nor cave, could hide the puir hill-folk when Redgauntlet was out with bogle and bloodhound after them, as if they had been aye many deer. And troth when they fand them, they didna mak muckle mair ceremony than a Highlandman wi' a roebuck. — It was just, "Will ye tak the test?" — if not, "Make ready — present — fire!" — and there lay the res-
eucant.

Far and wide was Sir Robert hated and feared. Men thought he had a direct compact with Satan — that he was proof against steel — and that bullets happed aff his buff-coat like hailstones from a hearth — that he had a mear that would turn a hare on the side of Carrifra-gawns — and muckle to the same purpose, of whilk sair anon. The best blessing they wared on him was, "Deil scowp wi' Redgauntlet!" He wags a bad master to his ain folk, though, and was weel enough liked by his tenants; and as for the lackies and troopers that raid out wi' him to the persecutions, as the Whigs ca'd those killing times, they wad hae drunken themselves blind to his health at any time.

Now you say to ken that my gudesire lived on Redgauntlet's grund — they ca' the place Primrose-Knowe. We had lived on the grund, and under the Redgauntlets, since the riding days, and lang before. It was a pleasant bit; and I think the air is callorer and fresher there than any where else in the country. It's a' deserted now; and I sat on the broken door-check three days since, and was glad I couldna see the plight the place was in; but that's a' wide o' the mark. There dwelt my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, a rambling, rattling, chiel! he had been in his young days, and could play weel on the pipes; he was famous at "Hoopers and Girders" — a' Cumberland couldna touch him at "Jockie Lattin" — and he had the finest finger for the back-lit between Berwick and Carlisle. The like o' Steenie wasna the sort that they made Whigs o'. And so he became a Tory, as they ca' it — which we now ca' Jacobites, just out of a kind of necessity, that he might belong to some side or other. He had nae ill-will to the Whig bodies, and liked little to see the blude rin, though, being obliged to follow Sir Robert in hunting and hoisting, watching and warding, he saw muckle mischief, and maybe did some, that he couldna avoid.

Now Steenie was a kind of favourite with his master, and kend a' the folks about the castle, and was often sent for to play the pipes when they were

at their merriment. Auld Dougal MacCallum, the butler, that had followed Sir Robert through gles and ill, thick and thin, pool and stream, was especially fond of the pipes, and aye gae my gudesire his gude word wi' the Laird; for Dougal could turn his master round his finger.

Weel, round came the Revolution, and it had like to have broken the hearts baith of Dougal and his master. But the change was not a'thegether sae great as they feared, and other folk thought for. The Whigs made an unca crawling what they wad do with their auld enemies, and in special wi' Sir Robert Redgauntlet. But there were ower many great folks dipped in the same doings, to mak a spick and span new warld. So Parliament passed it a' ower easy; and Sir Robert, bating that he was held to hunting foxes instead of Covenanters, remained just the man he was. His revel was as loud, and his hall as weel lighted, as ever it had been, though maybe he lacked the fines of the nonconformists, that used to come to stock his larder and cellar; for it is certain he began to be keener about the rents than his tenants used to find him before, and they behaved to be prompt to the rent-day, or else the Laird wasna pleased. And he was sic an awsome body, that nobody cared to anger him; for the oaths he swore, and the rage that he used to get into, and the looks that he put on, made men sometimes think him a devil incarnate.

Weel, my gudesire was nae manager — no that he was a very great manager — but he hadna the saving gift, and he got two terms' rent in arrear. He got the first brash at Whitsunday put ower wi' fair word and piping; but when Martinmas came, there was a summons from the grund-officer to come wi' the rent on a day preceese, or else Steenie behaved to fitt. Sair wark he had to get the siller; but he was weel-frended, and at last he got the lass scraped together — a thousand merks — the maist of it was from a neighbour they ca'd Laurie Lapraik — a sly tod. Laurie had waddie o' gear — could hunt wi' the bound and rin wi' the hare — and be Whig or Tory, sinner or sinner, as the wind stood. He was a professor in this Revolution warld, but he liked an orra sough of this warld, and a tunc on the pipes weel enough at a by time; and abune a', he thought he had gude security for the siller he lent my gudesire ower the stocking at Primrose-Knowe.

Away trots my gudesire to Redgauntlet Castle wi' a heavy purse and a light heart, glad to be out of the Laird's danger. Weel, the first thing he learned at the Castle was, that Sir Robert had fretted himself into a fit of the gout, because he did not appear before twelve o'clock. It wasna a'thegether for sake of the money, Dougal thought; but because he didna like to part wi' my gudesire aff the grund. Dougal was glad to see Steenie, and brought him into the great oak parlour, and there sat the Laird, his beesome lane, excepting that he had beride him a great, ill-favoured jack-snape, that was a special pet of his; a cankered beast it was and mony an ill-natured trick it played — ill to please it was, and easily angered — ran about the hall castle, chattering and yowling, and pinching, and biting folk, specially before ill-weather, or disturbances in the state. Sir Robert ca'd it Major

1 A precipitous side of a mountain in Moffatdale.

2 See Note H. *The Cameronians*

Weir, after the warlock that was burnt; and few folk liked either the name or the conditions of the creature — they thought there was something in it by ordinar — and my gudesire was not just easy in mind when the door shut on him, and he saw himself in the room wi' naeboddy but the Laird, Dougal MacCallum, and the Major, a thing that hadna chanced to him before.

Sir Robert sat, or, I should say, lay, in a great armed chair, wi' his grand velvet gown, and his feet on a cradle; for he had baith goust and gravel, and his face looked as gash and ghastly as Satan's. Major Weir sat opposite to him, in a red faced coat, and the Laird's wig on his head; and aye as Sir Robert girmed wi' pain, the jackanape girmed too, like a sheep's-head between a pair of tangs — an ill-faur'd, farsome couple they were. The Laird's buff-coat was hung on a pin behind him, and his broadsword and his pistols widail reach; for he kept up the auld fashion of having the weapons ready, and a horse saddled day and night, just as he used to do when he was able to leap on horse-back, and away after any of the hill-folk he could get speerings of. Some said it was for fear of the Whigs taking vengeance, but I judge it was just his auld custom — he wana gien to fear ony thing. The rental-book, wi' its black cover and brass clasps, was lying beside him; and a book of sculdudry sangs was put betwixt the leaves, to keep it open at the place where it bore evidence against the Goodman of Primrose-Knowe, as behind the hand with his mails and duties. Sir Robert gave my gudesire a look, as if he would have withgirded his heart in his bosom. Ye maun ken he had a way of bending his brows, that men saw the visible mark of a horse-shoe in his forehead, deep dinted, as if it had been stamped there.

"Are ye come light-handed, ye son of a toom whistle?" said Sir Robert. "Zounds! if you are —"

My gudesire, with as gude a countenance as he could put on, made a leg, and placed the bag of money on the table wi' a dash, like a man that does something clever. The Laird drew it to him hastily — "Is it all here, Steenie, man?"

"Your honour will find it right," said my gudesire.

"Here, Dougal," said the Laird, "gie Steenie a tass of brandy down stairs, till I count the siller and write the receipt."

But they weren't weel out of the room, when Sir Robert gied a yelloch that garr'd the Castle rook. Back ran Dougal — in flow the livery-men — yell on yell gied the Laird, lik an awn' twir' than theither. My gudesire knew not whether to stand or flee, but he ventured back into the parlour, where a' was gaun hirdy-girdie — naeboddy to say 'come in,' or 'gae out.' Terribly the Laird roared for cauld water to his feet, and wine to cool his throat; and Hell, hell, hell, and its flames, was aye the word in his mouth. They brought him water, and when they plinged his stoin' feet into the tub, he cried out it was burning; and folk say that it did bubble and sparkle like a seething caldron. He flung the cup at Dougal's head, and said he had given him blood instead of burgundy; and, sure enough, the lass washed clotied blood off the carpet

the next day. The jackanape they ca'd Major Weir, it jibbered and cried as if it was mocking its master; my gudesire's head was like to turn — he forgot baith siller and receipt, and down stairs he banged; but as he ran, the shrieks came faint and fainter; there was a deep-drawn shivering groan, and word gaid through the Castle, that the Laird was dead.

Weel, away came my gudesire, wi' his finger in his mouth, and his best hope was, that Dougal had seen the money-bag, and heard the Laird speak of writing the receipt. The young Laird, now Sir John, came from Edinburgh, to see things put to rights. Sir John and his father never gree'd weel. Sir John had been lred an advocate, and afterwards sat in the last Scots Parliament and voted for the Union, having gotten, it was thought, a rug of the compensations — if his father could have come out of his grave, he would hawe brained him for it on his awn hearthstane. Some thought it was easier, counting with the auld rough Knight than the fair-spoken young aue — but mair of that anon.

Dougal MacCallum, poor body, neither grat nor grained, but gaed about the house looking like a corpse, but directing, as was his duty, a' the order of the grand funeral. Now, Dougal looked aye waur and waur when night was coming, and was aye the last to gang to his bed, whilk was in a little round just opposite the chamber of aiais, whilk his master occupied while he was living, and where he now lay in state, as they ca'd it, weel-a-day! The night before the funeral, Dougal could keep his awn counsel nae langer; he came down with his proud spirit, and fairly asked auld Hutcheon to sit in his room with him for an hour. When they were in the round, Dougal took as tass of brandy to himself, and gave another to Hutcheon, and wished him all health and lang life, and said that, for himself, he wana lung for this world; for that, every night since Sir Robert's death, his silver can' had sounded from the state chamber, just as it used to do at nights in his lifetime, to call Dougal to help to turn him in his bed. Dougal said, that being alone with the dead on that floor of the tower, (for naeboddy cared to wake Sir Robert Redgauntlet like another corpse,) he had never dayred to answer the call, but that now his conscience checked him for neglecting his duty; for, "though death breaks service," said MacCallum, "it shall never break my service to Sir Robert; and I will answer his next whistle, so be you will stand by me, Hutcheon."

Hutcheon had nae will to the wark, but he had stood by Dougal in battle and broil, and he was not fail him at this pinch; so down the carles sat ower a stoup of brandy, and Hutcheon, who was something of a clerk, would have read a chapter of the Bible; but Dougal would hear naething but a bland of Davie Lindsay, whilk was the waur preparation.

When midnight came, and the house was quiet as the grave, sure enough the silver whistle sounded as sharp and shrill as if Sir Robert was blowing it, and up got the twa said serving-men, and tottered into the room where the dead man lay. Hutcheon saw enough at the first glance; for there were footies in the room, which showed him the foul fiend, in his ain shape, sitting on the Laird's coffin! Ower he cowered as if he had been dead. He could not tell how lang he lay in a trance at the door, but

1 A celebrated wizard, executed at Edinburgh for sorcery and other crimes.

when he gathered himself, he cried on his neighbour, and getting nae answer, raised the house, when Dougal was found lying dead within twa steps of the bed where his master's coffin was placed. As for the whistle, it was gaen anes and aye; but mony a time was it heard at the top of the house on the bartizan, and among the auld chimneys and turrets where the howlets have their nests. Sir John hushed the matter up, and the funeral passed over without nair bogle-work.

But when a' was ower, and the Laird was beginning to settle his affairs, every tenant was called up for his arrears, and my gudeaure for the full sum that stood against him in the rental-book. "Weel, away he trots to the Castle, to tell his story, and there he is introduced to Sir John, sitting in his father's chair, in deep mourning, with weepers and hanging cravat, and a small walking rapier by his side, instead of the auld broadsword that had a hundred-weight of steel about it, what with blade, chape, and basket-hilt. I have heard their communing so often tauld ower, that I almost think I was there myself, though I couldna be borth at the time. (In fact, Alan, my companion mimicked, with a good deal of humour, the flattering, conciliating tone of the tenant's address, and the hypocritical melancholy of the Laird's reply. His grandfather, he said, had, while he spoke, his eye fixed on the rental-book, as if it were a mastiff-dog that he was afraid would spring up and bite him.)

"I wuss ye joy, air, of the head seat, and the white loaf, and the braid haidship. Your father was a kind man to friends and followers; muckle grace to you, Sir John, to fill his shoon—his boots, I said say, for he seldom wore shoon, unless it were mulls when he had the gout."

"Ay, Steenie," quoth the Laird, sighing deeply; and putting his napkin to his een, "his was a sudden call, and he will be missed in the country; no time to set his house in order—weel prepared Godward, no doubt, which is the root of the matter—but left us behind a tangled heap to wyl, Steenie.—Hum! hem! We maun go to business, Steenie; much to do, and little time to do it in."

Here he opened the fatal volume. I have heard of a thing they call Doomsday-book—I am clear it has been a rental of back-gauging tenants.

"Stephen," said Sir John, still in the same soft, sleekit tone of voice—"Stephen Stevenson, or Steenson, ye are down here for a year's rent behind the hand—due at last term."

Stephen. "Please your honour, Sir John, I paid it to your father."

Sir John. "Ye took a receipt, then, doubtless, Stephen; and can produce it?"

Stephen. "Indeed I hadna time, an it like your honour; for nae sooner had I set down the ailler, and just as his honour, Sir Robert, that's gaen, drew it till him to count it, and write out the receipt, he was ta'en wi' the pains that removed him."

"That was unlucky," said Sir John, after a pause. "But ye maybe paid it in the presence of somebody. I want but a *testis* *qualis* evidence, Stephen. I would go ower strigly to work with the poor man."

Stephen. "Troth, Sir John, there was naeboddy in the room but Dougal MacCallum the butler. But, as your honour kens, he has e'en followed his auld master."

"Very unlucky again, Stephen," said Sir John, without altering his voice a single note. "The man to whom ye paid the money is dead—and the man who witnessed the payment is dead too—and the ailler, which should have been to the fore, is neither seen nor heard tell of in the repositories. How am I to believe a' this?"

Stephen. "I dinna ken, your honour; but there is a bit memorandum note of the very coins; for, God help me! I had to borrow out of twenty purses; and I am sure that ilka man there set down will take his grit oath for what purpose I borrowed the money."

Sir John. "I have little doubt ye borrowed the money, Steenie. It is the payment to my father that I want to have some proof of."

Stephen. "The ailler maun be about the house, Sir John. And since your honour never got it, and his honour that was canna have taen it wi' him, maybe some of the family may have seen it."

Sir John. "We will examine the servants, Stephen; that is but reasonable."

But lackey and lass, and page and groom, all denied stoutly that they had ever seen such a bag of money as my gudeaure described. What was want, he had unluckily not mentioned to any living soul of them his purpose of paying his rent. Ae queen had noticed something under his arm, but she took it for the pipes.

Sir John Redgauntlet ordered the servants out of the room, and then said to my gudeaure, "Now, Steenie, ye see ye see fair play; and, as I have little doubt, ye ken better where to find the ailler than any other body, I beg, in fair terms, and for your own sake, that you will end this fasherie; for, Stephen, ye maun pay or flit."

"The Lord forgie your opinion," said Stephen, driven almost to his wit's end—"I am an honest man."

"So am I, Stephen," said his honour; "and so are all the folks in the house, I hope. But if there be a knave amang us, it must be the that tells the story he cannot prove." He paused, and then added, mair sternly, "If I understand your trick, sir, you want to take advantage of some malicious reports concerning things in this family, and particularly respecting my father's sudden death, thereby to cheat me out of the money, and perhaps take away my character, by insinuating that I have received the rent I am demanding.—Where do you suppose this money to be?—I insist upon knowing."

My gudeaure saw every thing look so muckle against him, that he grew nearly desperate—however, he shifted from one foot to another, looked to every corner of the room, and made no answer.

"Speak out, aillrah," said the Laird, assuming a look of his father's, a very particular aye, which he had when he was angry—it seemed as if the wrinkles of his frown made that self-same fearful shape of a horse's shoe in the middle of his brow;—"Speak out, sir! I will know your thoughts;—do you suppose that I have this money?"

"Far be it frae me to say so," said Stephen. "Do you charge any of my people with having taken it?"

"I wad be laith to charge them that may be innocent," said my gudeaure; "and if there be any one that is guilty, I have nae proof."

"Some where the money must be, I there is a

word of truth in your story," said Sir John; "I ask where you think it is—and demand a correct answer!"

"In-hell, if you will have my thoughts of it," said my gudesire, driven to extremity,—"in hell! with your father, his jackanape, and his silver whistle."

Down the stairs he ran, (for the parlour was nae place for him after such a word,) and he heard the Laird swearing blood and wounds, behind him, as fast as ever did Sir Robert, and roaring for the bailie and the baron-officer.

Away rode my gudesire to his chief creditor, (him they ca'd Laurie Lapraik,) to try if he could make any thing out of him; but when he tauld his story, he got but the worst word in his wame—thief, beggar, and dyvour, were the safest terms; and to the boot of these hard terms, Laurie brought up the auld story of his dipping his hand in the blood of God's saunts, just as if a tenant could have helped riding with the Laird, and that a laird like Sir Robert Redgauntlet. My gudesire was, by this time, far beyond the bounds of patience, and, while he and Laurie were at deil speed the liars, he was wanchance enough to abuse Lapraik's doctrine as weel as the man, and said things that garr'd folk's flesh grin that heard them;—he wana just himsell, and he had lived wi' a wild set in his day.

At last they parted, and my gudesire was to ride hame through the wood of Pitmurkie, that is a' fou of black firs, as they say.—I ken the wood, but the firs may be black or white for what I can tell.—At the entry of the wood there is a wild common, and on the edge of the common, a little lonely exchange-house, that was keepit then by an ostler-wife, they suld hae ca'd her Tibbie Faw, and there puir Steenie cried for a mutchkin of brandy, for he had had no refreshment the hail day. Tibbie was earnest wi' him to take a bite of meat, but he couldna think o't, nor would he take his foot out of the stirrup, and took off the brandy wholly at twa draughts, and named a toast at each:—the first was, the memory of Sir Robert Redgauntlet, and might he never lie quiet in his grave till he had righted his poor bond-tenant; and the second was, a health to Man's Enemy, if he would but get him back the poek of siller, or tell him what came o't, for he saw the hail world was like to regard him as a thief and a cheat, and he took that waur than even the ruin of his house and hauld.

On he rode, little caring where. It was a dark night turned, and the trees made it yet darker, and he let the beast take its ain road through the wood; when all of a sudden, from tired and wearied that it was before, the nag began to spring, and flee, and extend, that my gudesire could hardly keep the saddle.—Upon the whilk, a horseman, suddenly riding up beside him, said, "That's a mettish beast of yours, freend; will you sell him?"—So saying, he touched the horse's neck with his riding-wand, and it fell into its auld heigh-heel of a stumbling trot. "But his spunk's soon out of him, I think," continued the stranger, "and that is like mony a man's courage, that thinks he wad do great things till he come to the proof."

My gudesire scarce listened to this, but spurred his horse, with "Gude o'en to you, freend."

But it's like the stranger was one that doesna lightly yield his point; for, ride as Steenie liked, he was aye beside him at the self-same pace. At

last my gudesire, Steenie Steenson, grew half angry; and to say the truth, half feared.

"What is it that ye want with me, freend?" he said. "If ye be a robber, I have nae money; if ye be a leal man, wanting company, I have nae heart to mirth or speaking; and if ye want to ken the road, I scarce ken it myself."

"If you will tell me your grief," said the stranger, "I am one that, though I have been sair miscal'd in the world, am the only hand for helping my freends."

So my gudesire, to ease his ain heart, mair than from any hope of help, told him the story from beginning to end.

"It's a hard pinch," said the stranger; "but I think I can help you."

"If you could lend the money, sir, and take a lang day—I ken nae other help on earth," said my gudesire.

"But there may be some under the earth," said the stranger. "Come, I'll be frank wi' you; I could lend you the money on bond, but you would maybe scruple my terms. Now, I can tell you, that your auld Laird is disturbed in his grave by your curses, and the wailing of your family, and if ye daur venture to go to see him, he will give you the receipt."

My gudesire's hair stood on end at this proposal, but he thought his companion might be some humorous chield that was trying to frighten him, and might end with lending him the money. Besides, he was bauld wi' brandy, and desperate wi' distress; and he said he had courage to go to the gate of hell, and a step farther, for that receipt.—The stranger laughed.

Weel, they rode on through the thickest of the wood, when, all of a sudden, the horse stopped at the door of a great house; and, but that he knew the place was ten miles off, my father would have thought he was at Redgauntlet Castle. They rode into the outer court-yard, through the muckle faulding yetts, and aneath the auld portcullis; and the whole front of the house was lighted, and there were pipes and fiddles, and as much dancing and derry within as used to be at Sir Robert's house at Pace and Yule, and such high seasons. They lap off, and my gudesire, as seemed to him, fastened his horse to the very ring he had tied him to that morning, when he gaed to wait on the young Sir John.

"God!" said my gudesire, "if Sir Robert's death be but a dream!"

He knocked at the ha' door just as he was wont, and his auld acquaintance, Dougal MacCallum, just after his wont, too, — came to open the door, and said, "Piper Steenie, are ye there, lad? Sir Robert has been crying for you."

My gudesire was like a man in a dream—he looked for the stranger, but he was gane for the time. At last he just tried to say, "Ha! Dougal Driveower, are ye living? I thought ye had been dead."

"Never fash yoursell wi' me," said Dougal, "but look to yourself; and see ye tak naething frae ony body here, neither meat, drink, or siller, except just the receipt that is your ain."

So saying, he led the way out through lalls and trances that were weel kend to my gudesire, and into the auld oak parlour; and there was as much singing of profane sangs, and birling of red wine,

and speaking blasphemy and woulddaddy, as had never been in Redgauntlet Castle when it was at the blithest.

But, Lord take us in keeping, what a set of ghastly revellers they were that sat around that table!—My gudesire loaned money that had long before gone to their phase, for often had he piped to the most part in the hall of Redgauntlet. There was the fierce Middleton, and the dissolute Rofies, and the crafty Lauderdale; and Dalryell, with his bald head and a beard to his girdle; and Earishall, with Cameron's blade on his hand; and wild Bonshaw, that tied blessed Mr Cargill's limbs till the blade sprung; and Dunbarton Douglas, the twice-turned traitor both to country and king. There was the Bluidy Advocate MacKenzie, who, for his worldly wit and wisdom had been to the rest as a god. And there was Claverhouse, as beautiful as when he lived, with his long, dark, curled locks, streaming down over his faced buff-coat, and his left hand always on his right smile-blade, to hide the wound that the silver bullet had made! He sat apart from them all, and looked at them with a melancholy, haughty countenance; while the rest hallooed, and sang, and laughed, that the room rang. But their smiles were fearfully contorted, from time to time; and their laugh passed into such wild sounds, as made my gudesire's very nails grow blue, and chilled the marrow in his bones.

They that waited at the table were just the wicked serving-men and troopers, that had done their work and cruel bidding on earth. There was the Lang Laird of the Netherdown, that helped to take Argyle; and the Bishop's summoner, that they called the Devil's Rattle-bag; and the wicked guardsmen in their leaced coats; and the savage Highland Amcrites, that shed blood like water; and many a proud serving-man, haughty of heart and bloody of hand, cringing to the rich, and making them wickedder than they would be; grinding the poor to powder, when the rich had broken them to fragments. And money, money made were coming and ganging, as busy in their vocation as if they had been alive.

Sir Robert Redgauntlet, in the midst of a' this fearful riot, cried, w' a voice like thunder, on Steenie Piper to come to the board-head where he was sitting; his legs stretched out before him, and swathed up with flannel, with his holster pistols aside him, while the great broad-sword rested against his chair, just as my gudesire had seen him the last time upon earth—the very cushion for the jackanape was close to him, but the creature itself was not there—it wasna, its hour, it's likely; for he heard them say as he came forward, "Is not the Major come yet?" And another answered, "The jackanape will be here betimes the morn." And when my gudesire came forward, Sir Robert, or his phiaist, or the devil in his likeness, said, "Weel, piper, hie ye rattled w' my son for the year's rent!"

With much ado my father got breath to say, that Sir John wou'd not settle without his honour's receipt.

"Ye shall hae that for a tune of the pipes, Steenie," said the appearance of Sir Robert—"Play us up 'Weel hoddled, Luckie.'"

Now this was a tune my gudesire learned frae a

warlock, that heard it when they were worshipping Satan at their meetings; and my gudesire had sometimes played it at the ranting suppers in Redgauntlet Castle but never very willingly; and now he grew cauld at the very name of it, and said, for excuse, he hadna his pipes w' him.

"MacCallum, ye limb of Beelzebub," said the fearful Sir Robert, "bring Steenie the pipes that I am keeping for him!"

MacCallum brought a pair of pipes might have served the piper of Donald of the Isles. But he gave my gudesire a nudge as he offered them; and looking secretly and closely, Steenie saw that the chanter was of steel, and heated to a white heat; so he had fair warning not to trust his fingers with it. So he excused himself again, and said, he was faint and frightened, and had not wind enough to fill the bag.

"Then ye mair eat and drink, Steenie," said the figure; "for we do little else here; and it's ill speaking between a faun man and a fasting."

Now these were the very words that the bloody Earl of Douglas said to keep the King's messenger in hand, while he cut the head off MacLellan of Bombie, at the Threave Castle; and that put Steenie's mair and mair on his guard. So he spoke up like a man, and said he came neither to eat, or drink, or make minstrelsy; but simply for his ain—to ken what was come o' the money he had paid, and to get a discharge for it; and he was so stout-hearted by this time, that he charged Sir Robert for conscience-sake—(he had no power to say the holy name)—and still hoped for peace and rest, to spend no'wares for him, but just to give him his ain.

The appearance gnashed its teeth and laughed, but it took from a large pocket-book the receipt, and handed it to Steenie. "There is your receipt, ye pitiful cur; and for the money, my dog-whelp of a son may go look for it in the Cat's Cradle."

My gudesire uttered mory thanks, and was about to retire, when Sir Robert roared aloud, "Stop though, thou sack-dondling son of a whore! I am not done with thee. HERE we do nothing for nothing; and you must return on this very day twelvemonth, to pay your master the homage that you owe me for my protection."

My father's tongue was loosed of a sudden, and he said aloud, "I refer myself to God's pleasure, and not to yours."

He had no sooner uttered the word than all was dark around him; and he sunk on the earth with such a sudden shock, that he lost both breath and sense.

How lang Steenie lay there, he could not tell; but when he came to himself, he was lying in the auld kirkyard of Redgauntlet parochie just at the door of the family aiale, and the skatcheon of the auld knight, Sir Robert, hanging over his head. There was a deep morning fog on grass and granite around him, and his horse was feeding quietly beside the minister's two cows. Steenie would have thought the whole was a dream, but he had the receipt in his hand, fairly written and signed by the auld Laird; only the last letters of his name were a little disorderly, written like one seized with sudden pain.

1 See Note I. *The Persecutors.*

2 The reader is referred for particulars to Pittwater's History of Scotland.

Sorely troubled in his mind, he left that dreary place, rode through the mist to Redgauntlet Castle, and with much ado he got speech of the Laird.

"Well, you dyvour bankrupt?" was the first word, "have you brought me my rent?"

"No," answered my gudesire, "I have not; but I have brought your honour Sir Robert's receipt for it."

"How, sirrah!—Sir Robert's receipt!—You told me he had not given you one."

"Will your honour please to see if that bit line is right?"

Sir John looked at every line, and at every letter, with much attention; and at last, at the date, which my gudesire had not observed,—"From my appointed place," he read, "*this twenty-fifth of November*."

"What!—That is yesterday!—Villain, thou must have gone to hell for this!"

"I got it from your honour's father—whether he be in heaven or hell, I know not," said Steenie.

"I will delate you for a warlock to the Privy Council!" said Sir John. "I will send you to your master, the devil, with the help of a tar-barrel and a tofel!"

"I intend to delate mysell to the Presbytery," said Steenie, "and tell them all I have seen last night, whilk are things fitter for them to judge of than a borrel man like me."

Sir John paused, composed himself, and desired to hear the full history; and my gudesire told it him from point to point, as I have told it you—word for word, neither more nor less.

Sir John was silent again for a long time; and at last he said, very composedly, "Steenie, this story of yours concerns the honour of many a noble family besides mine; and if it be a leasing-making, to keep yourself out of my danger, the least you can expect is to have a red-hot iron driven through your tongue, and that will be as bad as ascending your fingers wi' a red-hot chanter. But yet it may be true, Steenie; and if the money cast up, I shall not know what to think of it.—But where shall we find the Cat's Cradle? There are cats enough about the old house, but I think they kitten without the ceremony of a cradle."

"We were best ask Hutcheon," said my gudesire; "he ken's a' the odd corners about as weel as another serving-man that is now gone, and that I yad not like to name."

Aweel, Hutcheon, when he was asked, told them that a ruinous turret, long disused, next to the clock-house, only accessible by a ladder, for the opening was on the outside, and far above the battlements, was called of old the Cat's Cradle.

"There will I go immediately," said Sir John; and he took (with what purpose, Heaven ken) one of his father's pistols from the hall-table, where they had lain since the night he died, and hastened to the battlements.

It was a dangerous place to climb, for the ladder was said and tall, and wanted one or two rounds. However, up got Sir John, and entered the turret door, where his body stopped the only little light that was in the bit turret. Something flew at him wi' a vengeance, meant, dang him back over—bang!—goad the knight's pistol, and Hutcheon, that held the ladder, and my gudesire that stood beside him, hears a loud shriek. A minute after, Sir John flings the body of the jackdape down to them, and cries that the miller is fund, and that they should

coofie up and help him. And there was the bag of silver sure enough, and mony orra thing besides, that had been missing for mony a day. And Sir John, when he had ripped the turret wool, led my gudesire into the dining-parlour, and took him by the hand, and spoke kindly to him, and said he was sorry he should have doubted his word, and that he would hereafter be a good master to him, to make amends.

"And now, Steenie," said Sir John, "although this vision of yours tend, on the whole, to my father's credit, as an honest man, that he should, even after his death, desire to see justice done to a poor man like you, yet you are sensible that ill-dispositioned men might make bad constructions upon it, concerning his soul's health. So, I think, we had better lay the hail dirdum on that ill-deedie creature, Major Weir, and say naething about your dream in the wood of Pitmurkie. You had taken overmuckle brandy to be very certain about any thing; and Steenie, this receipt," (his hand shook while he held it out),—"it's but a queer kind of document, and we will do best, I think, to put it quietly in the fire."

"Oo, but far as queer as it is, it's a' the voucher I have for my rent," said my gudesire, who was afraid, it may be, of losing the benefit of Sir Robert's discharge.

"I will bear the contents to your credit in the rental-book, and give you a discharge under my own hand," said Sir John, "and that on the spot. And, Steenie, if you can hold your tongue about this matter, you shall sit, from this term downward, at an easier rent."

"Mony, thanks to your honour," said Steenie, who saw easily in what corner the wind was; "doubtless I will be conformable to all your honour's commands; only I would willingly speak wi' some powerful minister on the subject, for I do not like the sort of summons of appointment whilk your honour's father—"

"Do not call the phantom my father!" said Sir John, interrupting him.

"Weel then, the thing that was so like him," said my gudesire; "he spoke of my coming back to see him this time twelvemonth, and it's a weight on my conscience."

"Aweel, then," said Sir John, "if you be so much distressed in mind, you may speak to our minister of the parish; he is a douce man, regards the honour of our family, and the mair that he may look for some patronage from me."

"Wi' that, my father readily agreed that the receipt should be burnt, and the Laird threw it into the chimney with his ain hand. Burn it would not for them, though; but away it flew up the lumb, wi' a lang train of sparks at its tail, and a hissing noise like a squib."

My grandsire gaed down to the Manse, and tife minister, when he had heard the story, said, it was his real opinion, that though my gudesire had gae very far in tampering with dangerous matters, yet, as he had refused the devil's aries, (for such was the offer of meat and drink,) and had refused to do homage by piping at his bidding, he hoped, that if he held a circumspect walk hereafter, Satan could take little advantage by what was come and gane. And, indeed, my gudesire, of his ain accord, lang forewore bath the pipes and the brandy—it was not even till the year was out, and the fatal

day past, that he would so much as take the fiddle, or drink usquebaugh or tippeny.

Sir John made up his story about the jackanape as he liked himself; and some believe till this day there was no more in the matter than the fleching nature of the brute. Indeed, ye'll no hinder some to threap, that it was nane o' the auld Enemy that Dougal and my gudesire saw in the Laird's room, but only that waghchancy creature, the Major, capering on the coffin; and that, as to the blowing on the Laird's whistle that was heard after he was dead, the filthy brute could do that as weel as the Laird himself, if no better. But Heaven kens the truth, whilk first came out by the minister's wife, after Sir John and her ain gudeman were baith in the moulds. And then my gudesire, wha was failed in his limbs, but not in his judgment or memory—at least nothing to speak of—was obliged to tell the real narrative to his friends, for the credit of his good name. He might else have been charged for a warlock.¹

THE shades of evening were growing thicker around us as my conductor finished his long narrative with this moral—"Ye see, birkie, it is nae chancy thing to tak a stranger traveller for a guide, when ye are in an uncouth land."

"I should not have made that inference," said I. "Your grandfather's adventure was fortunate for himself, whom it saved from ruin and distress; and fortunate for his landlord also, whom it prevented from committing a gross act of injustice."

"Ay, but they had baith to sup the sauce o't sooner or later," said Wandering Willie;—"what was fristed wasna forgiven. Sir John died before he was much over threescore; and it was just like of a moment's illness. And for my gudesire, though he departed in fulness of life, yet there was my father, a yauld man of forty-five, fell down betwixt the stils of his pleugh, and raise never again, and left nae bairn but me, a puir sightless, fatherless, motherless creature, could neither work nor want. Things gaed weel enough at first; for Sir Redwald Redgauntlet, the only son of Sir John, and the oye of auld Sir Robert, and wa's me! the last of the honourable house, took the farm aff our hands, and brought me into his household to have care of me. He liked music, and I had the best teachers baith England and Scotland could gie me. Mony a merry year was I wi' him; but waes me! he gaed out with other pretty mon in the forty-five—I'll say nae mair about it—My head never settled weel since I lost him; and if I say another word about it, deil a bar will I have the heart to play the night.—Look out, my gentle chap," he resumed in a different tone, "ye should see the lights at Brokenburn Glen by this time."

¹ See Note K. End of Wandering Willie's Tale.

LETTER XII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Tam Luter was their minstrel meet,
Gude Lord as he could lance,
He play'd nae shrill, and sang nae sweet,
Till Fowle took a trance.
Auld Lightfoot there he did forset,
And counterfitted France;
He used himself as man discreet,
And up took Morrice dance.
See loud.

At Christ's Kirk on the Green that day.
KING JAMES I.

I CONTINUE to scribble at length, though the subject may seem somewhat deficient in interest. Let the grace of the narrative, therefore, and the concern we take in each other's matters, make amends for its tenuity. We fools of fancy, who suffer ourselves, like Malvolio, to be cheated with our own visions, have nevertheless, this advantage over the wise ones of the earth, that we have our whole stock of enjoyments under our own command, and can dish for ourselves an intellectual banquet with most moderate assistance from external objects. It is, to be sure, something like the frast which the Barinicide served up to Alnaschar; and we cannot expect to get fat upon such diet. But then, neither is there repletion nor nausea, which often succeed the grosser and more material revel. On the whole, I still pray, with the Ode to Castle Building—

"Give me thy help, which sickens not the heart;
Give me thy wealth, which has no wings to fly;
Give me the bliss thy visions can impart;
Thy friendship give me, warm in poverty!"

And so, despite thy solemn smile and sapient shake of the head, I will go on picking such interest as I can out of my trivial adventures, even though that interest should be the creation of my own fancy; nor will I cease to inflict on thy devoted eyes the labour of perusing the scrolls in which I shall record my narrative.

My last broke off as we were on the point of descending into the glen at Brokenburn, by the dangerous track which I had first travelled *en croupe*, behind a furious horseman, and was now again to brave under the precarious guidance of a blind man.

It was now getting dark; but this was no inconvenience to my guide, who moved on, as formerly, with instinctive security of step, so that we soon reached the bottom, and I could see lights twinkling in the cottage which had been my place of refuge on a former occasion. It was not thither, however, that our course was directed. We left the habitation of the Laird to the left, and turning down the brook, soon approached the small hamlet which had been erected at the mouth of the stream, probably on account of the convenience which it afforded as a harbour to the fishing-boats. A large, low cottage, full in our front, seemed highly illuminated; for the light not only glanced from every window and aperture in its frail walls, but was even visible from rents and fractures in the roof, composed of tarred shingles, repaired in part by thatch and dirt.

While these appearances engaged my attention, that of my companion was attracted by a regular succession of sounds, like a bouncing on the floor, mixed with a very faint noise of music, which

Willie's acute organs at once recognized and accounted for, while to me it was almost inaudible. The old man struck the earth with his staff in a violent passion. "The whorson fisher rabble! They have brought another violer upon my walk! They are such smuggling blackguards, that they must run in their very music; but I'll sort them waur than any ganger in the country.—Stay—hark—it's no a fiddle neither—it's the pipe and tabor bastard, Simon of Sowport, frae the Nicol Forest; but I'll pipe and tabor him!—Let me hae aince my left hand on his cravat, and ye shall see what my right will do. Come away, chap—come away, gentle chap—nae time to be picking and wailing your steps." And on he passed with long and determined strides, dragging me along with him.

I was not quite easy in his company; for, now that his minstrel pride was hurt, the man had changed from the quiet, decorous, I might almost say respectable person, which he seemed while he told his tale, into the appearance of a fierce, brawling, dissolute stroller. So that when he entered the large hut, where a great number of fishers, with their wives and daughters, were engaged in eating, drinking, and dancing, I was somewhat afraid that the impatient violence of my companion might procure us an indifferent reception.

But the universal shout of welcome with which Wandering Willie was received—the hearty congratulations—the repeated "Here's t'ye, Willie!"—"Where hae ye been, ye Ladd deevil?" and the call upon him to pledge them—above all, the speed with which the obnoxious pipe and tabor were put to silence, gave the old man such effectual assurance of undiminished popularity and importance, as at once put his jealousy to rest, and changed his tone of offended dignity, into one better fitted to receive such cordial greetings. Young men and women crowded round, to tell how much they were afraid some mischance had befallen him, and how two or three young fellows had set out in quest of him.

"It was nae mischance, praised be Heaven," said Willie, "but the absence of the lazy Joon Rob the Rambler, my comrade, that didna come to meet me on the Links; but I hae gotten a braw consort in his stead, worth a dozen of him, the unbanged blackguard."

"And wha is'tou's gotten, Wullie, lad?" said half a score of voices, while all eyes were turned on your humble servant, who kept the best countenance he could, though not quite easy at becoming the centre to which all eyes were pointed.

"I ken him by his hemmed cravat," said one fellow; "it's Gil Hobson, the scuple tailor frae Burgh.—Ye are welcome to Scotland, ye prick-the-clout loon," he said, thrusting forth a paw much the colour of a badger's back, and of most portentious dimensions.

"Gil Hobson! Gil whorson!" exclaimed Wandering Willie; "it's a gentle chap that! Judge to be an apprentice wi' said Joshua Geddes, to the quaker-trade."

"What trade be's that man?" said he of the badger-coloured fat.

"Canting, and lying,"—said Willie, which produced a thundering laugh; "but I am teaching the gallant a better trade, and that is, fencing and fiddling."

Willie's conduct in thus announcing something

like my real character, was contrary to compact; and yet I was rather glad he did so, for the consequence of putting a trick upon these rude and ferocious men, might, in case of discovery, have been dangerous to us both, and I was at the same time delivered from the painful effort to support a fictitious character. The good company, except perhaps one or two of the young women, whose looks expressed some desire for better acquaintance, gave themselves no farther trouble about me; but, while the seniors resumed their places near an immense bowl, or rather reeking caldron of brandy-punch, the younger arranged themselves on the floor, and called loudly on Willie to strike up.

With a brief caution to me, to "mind my credit, for fishers hae ears, though fish hae none," Willie led off in capital style, and I followed, certainly not so as to disgrace my companion, who, every now and then, gave me a nod of approbation. The dances were, of course, the Scottish jigs, and reels, and "twosome dances," with a strathspey or hornpipe for interlude; and the want of grace, on the part of the performers, was amply supplied by truth of ear, vigour and decision of step, and the agility proper to the northern performers. My own spirits rose with the mirth around me, and with old Willie's admirable execution, and frequent "weel dune, gentle chap, yet"—and, to confess the truth, I felt a great deal more pleasure in this rustic revel, than I have done at the more formal balls and concerts in your famed city, to which I have sometimes made my way. Perhaps this was because I was a person of more importance to the presiding matron of Brokenburnfoot, than I had the means of rendering myself to the far famed Miss Nickie Murray, the patroness of your Edinburgh assemblies. The person I mean was a buxom dame of about thirty, her fingers loaded with many a silver ring, and three or four of gold; her ankles liberally displayed from under her numerous, blue, white, and scarlet short petticoats, and attired in hose of the finest and whitest lamb's-wool, which arose from shoes of Spanish cordwain, fastened with silver buckles. She took the lead in my favour, and declared, "that the brave young gentleman should not weary himself to death wi' playing, but take the floor for a dance or twa."

"And what's to come of me, Dame Martin?" said Willie.

"Come o' thee?" said the dame; "mishanter on the auld beard o' ye! ye could play for twenty hours on end, and tire out the hail country-side wi' dancing before ye laid down your bow, saving for a by-drink or the like o' that."

"In troth, dame," answered Willie, "ye are no aye far wrang; see if my comrade is to take his dance, ye maun gie me my drink, and then bob it away like Madge of Middlebie."

The drink was soon brought; but while Willie was partaking of it, a party entered the hut, which arrested my attention at once, and intercepted the intended gallantry with which I had proposed to present my hand to the fresh-coloured, well-made, white-ankled Thetis, who had obtained me manumission from my mystical task.

This was nothing less than the sudden appearance of the old woman whom the Laird had termed Mabel; Cristal Nixon, his male attendant; and the young person who had said grace to us when I supped with him.

This young person — Alan, thou art in thy way a bit of a conjurer — this young person whom I *did* not describe, and whom you, for that very reason, suspected was not an indifferent object to me — is, I am sorry to say it, in very fact not so much so as in prudence she ought. I will not use the name of *loves* on this occasion; for I have applied it too often to transient whims and fancies to escape your satire, should I venture to apply it now. For it is a phrase, I must confess, which I have used — a romancer would say, profaned — a little too often, considering how few years have passed over my head. But seriously, the fair chaplain of Brokenburn has been often in my head when she had no business there; and if this can give thee any clew for explaining my motives in lingering about the country, and assuming the character of Willie's companion, why, hang thee, thou art welcome to make use of it — a perdition for which thou needst not thank me much, as thou wouldst not have failed to assume it, whether it were given or no.

Such being my feelings, conceive how they must have been excited, when, like a beam upon a cloud, I saw this uncommonly beautiful girl enter the apartment in which they were dancing; not, however, with the air of an equal, but that of a superior, come to grace with her presence the festival of her dependants. The old man and woman attended, with looks as sinister as hers were lovely, like two of the worst winter months waiting upon the bright-eyed May.

When she entered — wonder if thou wilt — she wore a *green mantle*, such as thou hast described as the garb of thy fair client, and confessed what I had partly guessed from thy personal description, that my chaplain and thy visiter were the same person. There was an alteration on her brow the instant she recognized me. She gave her cloak to her female attendant, and, after a momentary hesitation, as if uncertain whether to advance or retire, she walked into the room with dignity and composure, all making way, the men unbosoming, and the women curtseying respectfully, as she assumed a chair which was reverently pilfoted for her accommodation, apart from others.

There was then a pause, until the bustling mistress of the ceremonies, with awkward, but kindly courtesy, offered the young lady a glass of wine, which was at first declined, and at length only thus far accepted, that, bowing round to the festive company, the fair visiter wished them all health and mirth, and just touching the brim with her lip, replaced it on the salver. There was another pause; and I did not immediately recollect, confused as I was by this unexpected apparition, that it belonged to me to break it. At length a murmur was heard around me, being expected to exhibit, — nay, to lead down the dance, — in consequence of the previous conversation.

"Doil's in the fiddler lad," was muttered from more quarters than one — "saw folk ever see a thing as a shamefaced fiddler before?"

At length a venerable Triton, seconding his remonstrances with a hearty thump on my shoulder, cried out, "To the floor — to the floor, and let us see how we can fling — the lasses are a' waiting."

Up I jumped, sprung from the elevated station which constituted our orchestra, and, arranging my ideas as rapidly as I could, advanced to the head of the room, and, instead of offering my hand to

the white-footed Thetis aforesaid, I venturously made the same proposal to her of the Green Mantle.

The nymph's lovely eyes seemed to open with astonishment at the audacity of this offer; and, from the murmurs I heard around me, I also understood that it surprised, and perhaps offended, the bystanders. But after the first moment's emotion, she wreathed her neck, and drawing herself haughtily up, like one who was willing to shew that she was sensible of the full extent of her own condescension, extended her hand towards me, like a princess gracing a squire of low degree.

There is affectation in all this, thought I to myself, if the Green Mantle has borne true evidence — for young ladies do not make visits, or write letters to counsel learned in the law, to interfere in the motions of those whom they hold as cheap as this nymph seems to do me; and if I am cheated by a resemblance of cloaks, still I am interested to shew myself, in some degree, worthy of the favour she has granted with so much state and reserve. The dance to be performed was the old Scots Jigg, in which you are aware I used to play no sorry figure à la Pique's, when thy clumsy movements used to be rebuked by raps over the knuckles with that great professor's fiddlestick. The choice of the tune was left to my comrade Willie, who, having finished his drink, feloniously struck up the well-known and popular measure,

"Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
And merrily danced the Quaker."

An astounding laugh arose at my expense, and I should have been annihilated, but that the smile which mantled on the lip of my partner, had a different expression from that of ridicule, and seemed to say, "Do not take this to heart." And I did not, Alan — my partner danced admirably, and I like one who was determined, if outshone, which I could not help, not to be altogether thrown into the shade.

I assure you our performance, as well as Willie's music, deserved more polished spectators and auditors; but we could not then have been greeted with such enthusiastic shouts of applause as attended while I lagged my partner to her seat, and took my place by her side, as one who had a right to offer the attentions usual on such an occasion. She was visibly embarrassed, but I was determined not to observe her confusion, and to avail myself of the opportunity of learning whether this beautiful creature's mind was worthy of the smut in which nature had lodged it.

Nevertheless, however courageously I formed this resolution, you cannot but too well guess the difficulties I must needs have felt in carrying it into execution; since want of habitual intercourse with the charmers of the other sex has rendered me a sleepish cur, only one grasp less awkward than thyself. Then she was so very beautiful, and assumed an air of so much dignity, that I was like to fall under the fatal error of supposing she should only be addressed with something very clever; and in the hasty raking which my brains underwent in this persuasion, not a single idea occurred that common sense did not reject as fantastical on the one hand, or weary, flat, and stale criticism on the other. I felt as if my understanding were no longer my own, but was alternately under the dominion of

Aldeboron, phosporic, and that of his factious friend Rigdum-Funidos. How did I envy at that moment our friend Jack Oliver, who produces with such happy complaisance his fardel of small talk, and who, as he never doubts his own powers of affording amusement, passes them current with every pretty woman he approaches, and fills up the intervals of chat by his complete acquaintance with the exercise of the fan, the *flacon*, and the other duties of the *Cavaliers servientes*. Some of these I attempted, but I suppose it was awkwardly; at least the Lady Greenmantle received them as a princess accepts the homage of a clown.

Meantime the floor remained empty, and as the mirth of the good meeting was somewhat checked, I ventured, as a dernier resort, to propose a minuet. She thanked me, and told me laughingly enough, "she was here to encourage the harmless pleasures of these good folks, but was not disposed to make an exhibition of her own indifferent dancing for their amusement."

She paused a moment, as if she expected me to suggest something; and as I remained silent and rebuked, she bowed her head more graciously, and said, "Not to affront you, however, a country-dance, if you please."

What an ass was I, Alan, not to have anticipated her wishes! Should I not have observed that the ill-favoured couple, Mabel and Cristal, had placed themselves on each side of her seat, like the supporters of the royal arms? the man, thick, short, sluggish, and hirsute, as the fion; the female, skindried, tight-laced, long, lean, and hungry-fitted, like the unicorn. I ought to have recollected, that under the close inspection of two such watchful salvages, our communication, while in repose, could not have been easy; but that the period of dancing a minuet was not the very best time for conversation; but that the noise, the exercise, and the mazy confusion of a country-dance, where the inexperienced performers were every now and then running against each other, and compelling the other couples to stand still for a minute at a time, besides the more regular repose afforded by the intervals of the dance itself, gave the best possible openings for a word or two spoken in season, and without being liable to observation.

We had but just led down, when an opportunity of the kind occurred, and my partner said, with great gentleness and modesty, "It is not perhaps very proper in me to acknowledge an acquaintance that is not claimed; but I believe I speak to Mr Darsie Latimer?"

"Darsie Latimer was indeed the person that had now the honour and happiness—"

I would have gone on in the false gallop of compliment, but she cut me short. "And why," she said, "is Mr Latimer here, and in disguise, or at least assuming an office unworthy of a man of education?—I beg pardon," she continued,—"I would not give you pain, but surely making an acquaintance of a person of that description—"

She looked towards my friend Willie, and was silent. I felt heartily ashamed of myself, and hastened to say it was an idle frolic, which want of occupation had suggested, and which I could not regret, since it had prepared me the pleasure I at present enjoyed.

Without seeming to notice my compliment, she took the next opportunity to say, "Will Mr Latimer

me? permit a stranger who wishes him well to ask, whether it is right that, at his active age, he should be in the fair void of occupation, as to be ready to adopt low society for the sake of idle amusement?"

"You are severe, madam," I answered; "but I cannot think myself degraded by mixing with any society where I meet—"

Here I stopped short, conscious that I was giving my answer an unhandsome turn. The argumentum ad hominem, the last to which a polite man has recourse, may, however, be justified by circumstances, but seldom or never the argumentum ad feminam.

She filled up the blank herself which I had left. "Where you meet me, I suppose you would say! But the case is different. I am, from my unhappy fate, obliged to move by the will of others, and to be in places which I would by my own will gladly avoid. Besides, I am, except for these few minutes, no participator of the revels—a spectator only, and attended by my servants. Your situation is different—you are here by choice, the partaker and minister of the pleasures of a class below you in education, birth, and fortune. If I speak harshly, Mr Latimer," she added, with much sweetness of manner, "I mean kindly."

I was confounded by her speech, "severe in youthful wisdom;" all of noise or liveliness, suitable to such a dialogue, vanished from my recollection, and I answered with gravity like her own, "I am, indeed, better educated than these poor people; but you, madam, whose kind admonition I am grateful for, must know more of my condition than I do myself—I dare not say I am their superior in birth, since I know nothing of my own, or in fortune, over which hangs an impenetrable cloud."

"And why should you ignoreance on these points drive you into low society and idle habits?" answered my female monitor. "Is it meanly to wait till fortune cast her beams upon you, when by exertion of your own energy you might distinguish yourself?—Do not the pursuits of learning lie upon you—of manly ambition—of war?—But no—not of war, that has already cost you too dear."

"I will be what you wish me to be," I replied with eagerness—"You have but to choose my path, and you shall see if I do not pursue it with energy, were it only because you command me."

"Not because I command you," said the maiden, "but because reason, common sense, manhood, and, in one word, regard for your own safety, give the same counsel."

"At least permit me to reply, that reason and sense never assumed a tyrannical—of persuasion," I hastily added; for she turned from me—nor did she give me another opportunity of continuing what I had to say till the next pause of the dance, when, determined to bring our dialogue to a point, I said, "You mentioned manhood also, and in the same breath, personal danger. My ideas of manhood suggest that it is cowardice to retreat before dangers of a doubtful character. You, who appear to know so much of my fortunes that I might call you my guardian angel, tell me what these dangers are, that I may judge whether manhood calls on me to face or to fly them."

She was evidently perplexed by this appeal.

"You make me pay dearly for acting as your humane adviser," she replied at last: "I acknowledge an interest in your fate, and yet I dare not

tell you whence it arises; neither am I at liberty to say why, or from whom, you are in danger; but it is not less true that danger is near and imminent. Ask me no more, but, for your own sake, begone from this country. Elsewhere you are safe—here you do but invite your fate."

"But, am I doomed to bid thus farewell to almost the only human being who has shewed an interest in my welfare?—Do not say so—say that we shall meet again, and the hope shall be the leading star to regulate my course!"

"It is more than probable," she said—"much more than probable, that we may never meet again. The help which I now render you is all that may be in my power; it is such as I should render to a blind man whom I might observe approaching the verge of a precipice; it ought to excite no surprise, and requires no gratitude."

So saying, she again turned from me, nor did she address me until the dance was on the point of ending, when she said, "Do not attempt to speak to, or approach me again in the course of the night; leave the company as soon as you can, but not abruptly, and God be with you."

I handed her to her seat, and did not quit the fair palm I held, without expressing my feelings by a gentle pressure. She coloured slightly, and withdrew her hand, but not angrily. Seeing the eyes of Cristel and Mabel sternly fixed on me, I bowed deeply, and withdrew from her; my heart swelling, and my eyes becoming dim in spite of me, as the shifting crowd hid us from each other.

It was my intention to have crept back to my comrade Willie, and resumed my bow with such spirit as I might, although, at the moment, it would have given half my income for an instant's solitude. But my retreat was cut off by Dame Martin, with the frankness—if it is not an inconsistent phrase—of rustic coquetry, that goes straight up to the point.

"Ay, lad, ye seem unca sune weary, to dance sae lightly! Better the nag that ambles a' the day, than him that makes a brattle for a mile, and then's done wi' the road."

This was a fair challenge, and I could not decline accepting it. Besides, I could see Dame Martin was queen of the revels; and so many were the rude and singular figures about me, that I was by no means certain whether I might not need some protection. I seized on her willing hand, and we took our places in the dance, where, if I did not acquit myself with all the acceptance of step and movement which I had before attempted, I at least came up to the expectations of my partner, who said, and almost swore, "I was prime at it;" while, stimulated to her utmost exertions, she herself frisked like a kid, snapp'd her fingers like castanets, whooped like a Bacchanal, and bounded from the floor like a tennis-ball,—ay, till the colour of her garters was no particular mystery. She made the least secret of this, perhaps, that they were sky-blue, and fringed with silver.

The time has been that this would have been special fun; or rather, last night was the only time I can recollect these four years when it would not have been so; yet, at this moment, I cannot tell you how I longed to be rid of Dame Martin. I almost wished she would sprain one of those "many-twinkling" ankles, which served her so alerdy; and when, in the midst of her exuberant capricious, I

saw my former partner leaving the apartment, and with eyes, as I thought, turning towards me, this unwillingness to carry on the dance increased to such a point, that I was almost about to feign a sprain or a dislocation myself, in order to put an end to the performance. But there were around me scores of old women, all of whom looked as if they might have some sovereign recipe for such an accident; and, remembering Gil Blas and his pretended disorder in the robbers' cavern, I thought it as wise to play Dame Martin fair, and dance till she thought proper to dismiss me. What I did I resolved to do strenuously, and in the latter part of the exhibition, I cut and sprang from the floor as high and as perpendicularly as Dame Martin herself; and received, I promise you, thunders of applause, for the common people always prefer exertion and agility to grace. At length Dame Martin could dance no more, and, rejoicing at my release, I led her to a seat, and took the privilege of a partner to attend her.

"Heh, ains," exclaimed Dame Martin, "I am sair forfoughen! Troth, callant, I think ye have been amais the death o' me."

I could only atone for the alleged offence by fetching her some refreshment, of which she readily partook.

"I have been lucky in my partners," I said, "first that pretty young lady, and then you, Mrs Martin."

"Hout wi' your fleecing," said Dame Martin. "Gae wa—gae wa' till; dinna blaw in folk's lug that gae; me and Miss Lillias even'd thegither! Na, na, lad—od, she is maybe four or five years younger than the like o' me,—bye and attour her gentle havinga."

"She is the Laird's daughter!" said I, in as careless a tone of inquiry as I could assume.

"His daughter, man! Na, na, only his niece—and aib aneugh to him, I think."

"Ay, indeed," I replied; "I thought she had borne his name."

"She bears her ain name, and that's Lillias."

"And has she no other name?" asked I.

"What needs she another till she gets a gudeman?" answered my Thetia, a little misfit perhaps—to use the women's phrase—that I turned the conversation upon my former partner, rather than addressed it to herself.

There was a little pause, which was interrupted by Dame Martin observing, "They are standing up again."

"True," said I, having no mind to renew my late violent copriels, "and I must go help old Willie."

Ere I could extricate myself, I heard poor Thetia address herself to a sort of Mer-man in a jacket of seaman's blue, and a pair of trowsers, (whose hand, by the way, she had rejected at an earlier part of the evening,) and intimate that she was now disposed to take a trip.

"Trip away, then, dearie," said the vindictive man of the waters, without offering his hand; "there," pointing to the floor, "is a roomy berth for you."

Certain I had made one enemy, and perhaps two. I hastened to my original seat beside Willie, and began to handle my bow. But I could see that my conduct had made an unfavourable impression; the words, "stour conceited chap,"—"haflins gentle,"

and at length, the still more alarming epithet of "spy," began to be buzzed about, and I was bitterly glad when the apparition of Sam's visage at the door, who was already possessed of and draining a can of punch, gave me assurance that my means of retreat were at hand. I intimated as much to Willie, who probably had heard more of the murmurs of the company than I had, for he whispered, "Ay, ay—awa wi' ye—ower lang here—slide out canny—dinna let them see ye are on the tramp."

I slipped half-a-guinea into the old man's hand, who answered, "Truts! pruts! nonsense! but I'll no refuse, trusting ye can afford it.—Awa wi' ye—and if any body stops ye, cry on me."

I glided, by his advice, along the room as if looking for a partner, joined Sam, whom I disengaged with some difficulty from his can, and we left the cottage together in a manner to attract the least possible observation. The horses were tied in a neighbouring shed, and as the moon was up, and I was now familiar with the road, broken and complicated as it is, we soon reached the Shepherd's Bush, where the old landlady was sitting up waiting for us, under some anxiety of mind, to account for which she did not hesitate to tell me that some folks had gone to Brokenburn from her house, or neighbouring towns, that did not come so safe back again. "Wandering Willie," she said, "was doubtless a kind of protection."

Here Willie's wife, who was smoking in the chimney corner, took up the praises of her "hinnie," as she called him, and endeavoured to awaken my generosity afresh, by describing the dangers from which, as she was pleased to allege, her husband's countenance had assuredly been the means of preserving me. I was not, however, to be fooled out of more money at this time, and went to bed in haste, full of various cogitations.

I have since spent a couple of days betwixt Mount Sharon and this place, and betwixt reading, writing to thee this momentous history, forming plans for seeing the lovely Lillias, and—partly, I think, for the sake of contradiction—angling a little in spite of Joshua's scruples—though I am rather liking the amusement better as I begin to have some success in it.

And now, my dearest Alan, you are in full possession of my secret—let me as frankly into the recesses of your brain. How do you feel towards this fair ignis fatuus, this lily of the desert? Tell me honestly; for however the recollection of her may haunt my own mind, my love for Alan Fairford surpasses the love of woman. I know, too, that when you do love, it will be so

"Love once and love no more."

A deep-consuming passion, once kindled in a breast so steady as yours, would never be extinguished but with life. I am of another and more volatile temper, and though I shall open your next with a trembling hand, and uncertain heart, yet let it bring a frank confession that this fair unknown has made a deeper impression on your gravity than you reckoned for, and you will see I can tear the arrow from my own wound, harp and all. In the meantime, though I have formed schemes once more to see her, I will, you may rely on it, take no step for putting them into practice. I have refrained from this hitherto, and I give you my word of honour, I shall continue

to do so; yet why should you need any further assurance from one who is so entirely yours as

D. L.

P. S.—I shall be on thorns till I receive your answer. I read, and re-read your letter, and cannot for my soul discover what your real sentiments are! Sometimes I think you write of her as one in jest—and sometimes I think that cannot be. Put me at ease as soon as possible.

LETTER XIII.

ALAN FAIRFORD TO DARLIE LATIMER.

I WRITE in the instant, as you direct; and in a tragic-comic humour, for I have a tear in my eye, and a smile on my cheek. Dearest Darlie, sure never a being but yourself could be so generous—sure never a being but yourself could be so absurd! I remember when you were a boy you wished to make your fine new whip a present to old aunt Peggy, merely because she admired it; and now, with like unreflecting and inappropriate liberality, you would resign your beloved to a smoke-dried young sophister, who cares not one of the hairs which it is his occupation to split, for all the daughters of Eve. I in love with your Lillias—your Green-mantle—your unknown epicurean!—why I scarce saw her for five minutes, and even then only the tip of her chin was distinctly visible. She was well made, and the tip of her chin was of a most promising cast for the rest of the face; but, Heaven save you! she came upon business! and for a lawyer to fall in love with a pretty client on a single consultation, would be as wise as if he became enamoured of a particularly bright sun-beam which chanced for a moment to gild his barwig. I give you my word I am heart-whole; and moreover, I assure you, that before I suffer a woman to sit near my heart's core, I must see her full face, without mask or mantle, ay, and know a good deal of her mind into the bargain. So never fret yourself on my account, my kind and generous Darlie; but, for your own sake, have a care, and let not an idle attachment, so lightly taken up, lead you into serious danger.

On this subject I feel so apprehensive, that now when I am decorated with the honours of the gown, I should have abandoned my career at the very starting to come to you, but for my father having contrived to clog my heels with fetters of a professional nature. I will tell you the matter at length, for it is comical enough; and why should not you list to my juridical adventures, as well as I to those of your fiddling knight-errantry?

It was after dinner, and I was considering how I might best introduce to my father the private resolution I had formed to set off for Dumfriesshire, or whether I had not better run away at once, and plead my excuse by letter, when, assuming the peculiar look with which he communicates any of his intentions respecting me, that he suspects may not be altogether acceptable, "Alan," he said, "ye now wear a gown—ye have opened shop, as we would say of a more mechanical profession; and, doubtless, ye think the floor of the courts is strewn

with guineas, and that ye have only to stoop down to gather them!"

"I hope I am sensible, sir," I replied, "that I have some knowledge and practice to acquire, and must stoop for that in the first place."

"It is well said," answered my father; and, always afraid to give too much encouragement, added, "Very well said, if it be well acted up to — Stoop to get knowledge and practice is the very word. Ye know very well, Alan, that in the other faculty who study the *Ars medendi*, before the young doctor gets to the bedside of palaces, he must, as they call it, walk the hospitals; and cure Lazarus of his sores, before he be admitted to prescribe for Dives, when he has gout or indigestion —"

"I am aware, sir, that —"

"Whist! — do not interrupt the court — Well — also the chirurgeons have an useful practice, by which they put their apprentices and tyroes to work upon senseless dead bodies, to whist, as they can do no good, so they certainly can do as little harm; while at the same time the tyro, or apprentice, gains experience, and becomes fit to whip off a leg or arm from a living subject, as cleanly as ye would slice an onion."

"I believe I guess your meaning, sir," answered I; "and were it not for a very particular engagement —"

"Do not speak of me of engagements; but whist! — there is a good lad — and do not interrupt the court."

My father, you know, is apt — be it said with all filial duty — to be a little proud in his harangues. I had nothing for it but to lean back and listen.

"Maybe you think, Alan, because I have, doubtless, the management of some actions in dependence, which my worthy clients have intrusted me with, that I may think of airting them your way *instantly*; and so setting you up in practice, so far as my small business or influence may go; and, doubtless, Alan, that is a duty which I hope may come round. But then, before I give, as the proverb hath it, 'My own fish-guts to my own sea-maws,' I must, for the sake of my own character, be very sure that my sea-maw can pick them to some purpose. What say ye?"

"I am so far," answered I, "from wishing to get early into practice, sir, that I would willingly bestow a few days —"

"In farther study, ye would say, Alan. But that is not the way either — ye must walk the hospitals — ye must cure Lazarus — ye must cut and carve on a departed subject, to shew your skill."

"I am sure," I replied, "I will undertake the cause of any poor man with pleasure, and bestow as much pains upon it as if it were a Duke's; but for the next two or three days —"

"They must be devoted to close study, Alan — very close study indeed; for ye must stand primed for a hearing, in *præsentia Domini* on Tuesday next."

"I, sir!" I replied in astonishment — "I have not opened my mouth in the Outer-House yet!"

"Never mind the Court of the Gentles, man," said my father; "we will have you into the Sanctuary at once — over shoes, over boots."

"But, sir, I should really spoil any cause thrust on me so hastily."

"Ye cannot spoil it, Alan," said my father, rub-

bing his hands with much complacency; "that is the very cream of the business, man — it is just as I said before, a subject upon which all the tyroes have been trying their whistles for fifteen years; and as there have been about ten or a dozen agents concerned, and each took his own way, the case is come to that pass, that Stair or Arnison could not mend it; and I do not think even you, Alan, can do it much harm — ye may get credit by it, but ye can lose none."

"And pray what is the name of my happy client, sir?" said I, ungraciously enough, I believe.

"It is a well-known name in the Parliament-House," replied my father. "To say the truth, I expect him every moment; it is Peter Peebles!"

"Peter Peebles!" exclaimed I, in astonishment; "he is an insane beggar — as poor as Job, and as mad as a March hare!"

"He has been pleading in the court for fifteen years," said my father, in a tone of commiseration, which seemed to acknowledge that this fact was enough to atone for the poor man's condition both in mind and circumstances.

"Besides, sir," I added, "he is on the Poor's Roll; had you know there are advocates regularly appointed to manage those cases; and for me to presume to interfere —"

"Whist! Alan! — never interrupt the court — all that is managed for ye like a tow'd ball!" (my father sometimes draws his similes from his once favourite game of golf;) — "you must know, Alan, that Peter's cause will to have been opened by young Dumtoustie — ye may ken the lad, a son of Dumtoustie of that ilk, member of Parliament for the county of —, and a nephew of the Laird's younger brother, worthy Lord Bladderskate, which ye are aware sounds as like being akin to a peaship² and a sheriffdom, as a sieve is sib to a riddle. Now, Saunders Drudgeit, my lord's clerk, came to me this morning in the House, like an heret of his wits; for it seems that young Dumtoustie is one of the Poor's Lawyers, and Peter Peebles's process had been remitted to him of course. But so soon as the harebrained goose saw the pokes³ (as, indeed, Alan, they are none of the least,) he took fright, called for his nag, lap on, and away to the country is he gone; and so, said Saunders, my lord is at his wit's end w' venation and shame, to get his nevy break off the course at the very starting. 'I'll sell you, Saunders,' said I, 'were I my lord, and a friend or kinsman of mine should leave the town while the court was sitting, that kinsman, or be what he liked, should never darken my door again.' And then, Alan, I thought to turn the ball our own way; and I said that you were a gay sharp birkie, just off the iron, and if it would oblige my lord, and so forth, you would open Peter's cause on Tuesday, and make some handsome apology for the necessary absence of your learned friend, and the loss which your client and the court had sustained, and so forth. Saunders tap at the proposition like a cock at a groomer; for, he said, the only chance was to get a new hand, that did not ken the charge he was taking upon him; for there was not a lad of two Session's standing that was not dead-

¹ See Note L. Peter Peebles.

² Formerly, a lawyer, supposed to be under the peculiar patronage of any particular Judge, was invisciously termed his *peat* or *pet*.

³ Process-bags.

back of Peter Peebles and his cause; and he advised me to break the matter gently to you at the first; but I told him you were a good bairn, Alan, and had no will and pleasure in these matters but mine."

What could I say, Darsie, in answer to this arrangement, so very well meant—so very vexatious at the same time!—To imitate the defection and flight of young Dumtoustie, was at once to destroy my father's hopes of me for ever; nay, such is the keenness with which he regards all connected with his profession, it might have been a step to breaking his heart. I was obliged, therefore, to bow in sad acquiescence, when my father called to James Wilkinson to bring the two bits of poles he would find on his table.

Exit James, and presently re-enters, bending under the load of two huge leathern bags, full of papers to the brim, and labelled on the greasy backs with the magic impress of the clerks of court, and the title, *Peebles against Plainstones*. This huge mass was deposited on the table, and my father, with no ordinary glee in his countenance, began to draw out the various bundles of papers, secured by none of your red tape or whipcord, but stout, substantial casts of tarred rope, such as might have held small craft at their moorings.

I made a last and desperate effort to get rid of the impending job. "I am really afraid, sir, that this case seems so much complicated, and there is so little time to prepare, that we had better move the Court to supersede it till next Session."

"How, sir!—how, Alan?" said my father—"Would you approbate and reprobate, sir!—You have accepted the poor man's cause, and if you have not his fee in your pocket, it is because he has none to give you; and now, would you approbate and reprobate in the same breath of your mouth!—Think of your oath of office, Alan, and your duty to your father, my dear boy."

Once more, what could I say!—I saw from my father's hurried and alarmed manner, that nothing could vex him so much as failing in the point he had determined to carry, and once more justified my readiness to do my best, under every disadvantage.

"Well, well, my boy," said my father, "the Lord will make your days long in the land, for the honour you have given to your father's gray hairs. You may find wise advisers, Alan, but none that can wish you better."

My father, you know, does not usually give way to expressions of affection; and they are interesting in proportion to their rarity. My eyes began to fill at seeing his glisten; and my delight at having given him such sensible gratification would have been unalloyed but for the thoughts of you. These out of the question, I could have grappled with the *baggs*, had they been as large as corn-sacks. But, to turn what was grave into farce, the door opened, and Wilkinson entered in Peter Peebles.

"You must have seen this original, Darsie, who, like others in the same predicament, continues to haunt the courts of justice, where he has made shipwreck of time, means, and understanding. Such insane paupers have sometimes seemed to me to resemble wrecks lying upon the shoals of the Goodwin Sands, or in Yarmouth Roads, warning other vessels to keep aloof from the banks on which they have been lost; or rather, such ruined clients are

like scarecrows and potato-bogles, distributed through the courts to scare away fools from the scene of litigation."

The identical Peter wears a huge great-coat, threadbare and patched itself, yet carefully so disposed and secured by what buttons remain, and many supplementary pins, as to conceal the still more infirm state of his under garments. The shoes and stockings of a ploughman were, however, seen to meet at his knees with a pair of brownish, blackish breeches; a rusty-coloured handkerchief, that has been black in its day, surrounded his throat, and was an apology for linen. His hair, half gray, half black, escaped in elf-locks around a huge wig, made of tow, as it seemed to me, and so much shrunk, that it stood up on the very top of his head; above which he plants, when covered, an immense cocked hat, which, like the chieftain's banner in an ancient battle, may be seen any orderday betwixt nine and ten, high towering above all the fluctuating and changeful scene in the Outer-House, where his eccentricities often make him the centre of a group of petulant and teasing boys, who exercise upon him every art of ingenious torture. His countenance, originally that of a portly, comely bourgeois, is now emaciated with poverty and anxiety, and rendered wild by an insane lightness about the eyes; a withered and blighted skin and complexion; features begrimed with snuff, charged with the self-importance peculiar to insanity; and a habit of perpetually speaking to himself. Such was my fortunate client; and I must allow, Darsie, that my profession had need to do a great deal of good, if, as is much to be feared, it brings many individuals to such a pass.

After we had been, with a good deal of form, presented to each other, at which time I easily saw by my father's manner that he was desirous of supporting Peter's character in my eyes, as much as circumstances would permit, "Alan," he said, "this is the gentleman who has agreed to accept of you as his counsel, in place of young Dumtoustie."

"Entirely out of favour to my old acquaintance your father," said Peter, with a benign and patronising countenance, "out of respect to your father, and my old intimacy with Lord Bladdernate. Otherwise, by the *Regiam Majestatem*! I would have presented a petition and complaint against Daniel Dumtoustie, Advocate, by name and surname—I would, by all the practices!—I know the forms of process; and I am not to be trifled with."

My father here interrupted my client, and reminded him that there was a good deal of business to do, as he proposed to give the young counsel an outline of the state of the conjoined process, with a view to letting him into the merits of the cause, disencumbered from the points of form. "I have made a short abridge, Mr. Peebles," said he; "having sat up late last night, and employed much of this morning in wading through these papers, to save Alan some trouble, and I am now about to state the result."

"I will state it myself," said Peter, breaking in without reverence upon his solicitor.

"No, by no means," said my father; "I am your agent for the time."

"Mine eleventh in number," said Peter; "I

have a new one every year; I wish I could get a new coat as regularly."

"Your agent for the time," resumed my father; "and you, who are acquainted with the forms, know that the client states the cause to the agent — the agent to the counsel —"

"The counsel to the Lord Ordinary?" continued Peter, once set-a-going, like the peal of an alarm clock, "the Ordinary to the Inner-House, the President to the Bench. It is just like the rope to the man, the man to the ox, the ox to the water, the water to the fire —"

"Hush, for Heaven's sake, Mr Peebles," said my father, cutting his recitation short; "time wears on — we must get to business — you must not interrupt the court, you know. — Hem, hem! From this abbreviate it appears —"

"Before you begin," said Peter Peebles, "I'll thank you to order me a morsel o' bread and cheese, or some cauld meat, or broth, or the like alimentary provision; I was so anxious to see your son, that I could not eat a mouthful of dinner."

Heartily glad, I believe, to have so good a chance of stopping his client's mouth effectually, my father ordered some cold meat; to which James Wilkinson, for the honour of the house, was about to add the brandy bottle, which remained on the side-board, but, at a wink from my father, supplied its place with small beer. Peter charged the provisions with the rapacity of a famished lion, and so well did the diversion engage him, that though, while my father stated the case, he looked at him repeatedly, as if he meant to interrupt his statement, yet he always found more agreeable employment for his mouth, and returned to the cold beef with an avidity which convinced me he had not had such an opportunity for many a day of satiating his appetite. Omitting much formal phraseology, and many legal details, I will endeavour to give you, in exchange for your fiddler's tale, the history of a litigant, or rather, the history of his lawsuit.

"Peter Peebles and Paul Plainstones," said my father, "entered into partnership, in the year —, as mercers and linendrapers, in the Lucken-booths, and carried on a great line of business to mutual advantage. But the learned counsel needeth not to be told, *societas est mater discordiarum*, partnership oft makes pleasship. The company being dissolved by mutual consent, in the year —, the affairs had to be wound up, and after certain attempts to settle the matter extra-judicially, it was at last brought into the Court, and has branched out into several distinct processes, most of which have been conjoined by the Ordinary. It is to the state of these processes that counsel's attention is particularly directed. There is the original action of Peebles v. Plainstones, convening him for payment of £3000, less or more, as alleged balance due by Plainstones. 2dly, There is a counter action, in which Plainstones is pursuer and Peebles defender, for £2500, less or more, being balance alleged *per contra*, to be due by Peebles. 3dly, Mr Peebles's seventh agent advised an action of Compt and Reckoning at his instance, wherein what balance should prove due on either side might be fairly struck and ascertained. 4thly, To meet the hypothetical case, that Peebles might be found liable in a balance to Plainstones, Mr Wildgoose, Mr Peebles's eighth agent, recommended a Multi-

plepointing, to bring all parties concerned into the field."

My brain was like to turn at this account of lawsuit within lawsuit, like a nest of chip-boxes, with all of which I was expected to make myself acquainted.

"I understand," I said, "that Mr Peebles claims a sum of money from Plainstones — how then can he be his debtor? and if not his debtor, how can he bring a Multiplepointing, the very summons of which sets forth, that the pursuer does owe certain monies, which he is desirous to pay by warrant of a judge?"

"Ye know little of the matter, I doubt, friend," said Mr Peebles; "a Multiplepointing is the safest *remedium juris* in the whole form of process. I have known it conjoined with a declarator of marriage. — Your beef is excellent," he said to my father, who in vain endeavoured to resume his legal disquisition; "but something highly powdered — and the twopenny is undeniable; but it is small swipes — small swipes — more of hop than malt — with your leave, I'll try your black bottle."

My father started to help him with his own hand, and in due measure; but, infinitely to my amusement, Peter got possession of the bottle by the neck, and my father's ideas of hospitality were far too scrupulous to permit his attempting, by any direct means, to redeem it; so that Peter returned to the table triumphant, with his prey in his clutch.

"Better have a wine-glass, Mr Peebles," said my father, in an admonitory tone, "you will find it pretty strong."

"If the kirk is over muckle, we can sing mass in the quire," said Peter, helping himself in the goblet out of which he had been drinking the small beer. "What is it, usquebaugh! — BRANDY, as I am an honest man! I had almost forgotten the name and taste of brandy. — Mr Fairford elder, your good health," (a mouthful of brandy). — "Mr Alan Fairford, wishing you well through your arduous undertaking," (another go-down of the comfortable liquor.) "And now, though you have given a tolerable breviate of this great lawsuit, of which every body has heard something that has walked the boards in the Outer-House, (here 's to ye again, by way of interim decretet,) yet ye have omitted to speak a word of the arrests."

"I was just coming to that point, Mr Peebles."

"Or of the action of suspension of the charge on the bill."

"I was just coming to that."

"Or the advocacy of the Sheriff-Court process."

"I was just coming to it."

"As Tweed comes to Melrose, I think," said the litigant; and then filling his goblet about a quarter full of brandy, as if in absence of mind, "Oh, Mr Alan Fairford, ye are a lucky man to buckle to such a cause as mine at the very outset! It is like a specimen of all causes, man. By the Regiam, there is not a *remedium juris* in the practices but ye'll find a spice o't. Here's to your getting weel through with it — Pahut — I'm drinking naked spirits, I think. But if the heathen be over strong, we'll christen him with the brewer," (here he added a little small beer to his beverage, paused, rolled his eyes, winked, and proceeded,) — "Mr Fairford —

1 Multiplepointing is, I believe, equivalent to what is called in England a case of Double Distress.

the action of assault and battery, Mr Fairford, when I compelled the villain Plainstanes to pull my nose within two steps of King Charles's statue, in the Parliament Close — there I had him in a nose-net. Never man could tell me how to shape that process — no counsel that ever smelled wind could condescend and say whether it were best to proceed by way of petition and complaint, *ad eundem publicam*, with consent of his Majesty's advocate, or by action on the statute for battery *pendente lite*, which would be the winning my plea at once, and so getting a back-door out of Court. — By the Regiam, that beef and brandy is unco' hot at my heart — I maun try the ale again" (sipped a little beer;) "and the ale's but cauld, I maun e'en put in the rest of the brandy."

He was as good as his word, and proceeded in so loud and animated a style of elocution, thumping the table, drinking and snuffing alternately, that my father, abandoning all attempts to interrupt him, sat silent and ashamed, suffering, and anxious for the conclusion of the scene.

"And then to come back to my pet process of all — my battery and assault process, when I had the good luck to provoke him to pull my nose at the very threshold of the Court, which was the very thing I wanted — Mr Pest, ye ken him, Daddie Fairford? (Old Pest was for making it out *hame-sucken*, for he said the Court might be said — said — ugh! — to be my dwelling-place. I dwell mair there than ony gate else, and the essence of *hame-sucken* is to strike a man in his dwelling-place — mind that, young advocate — and so there's hope Plainstanes may be hanged, as many has for a less matter; for, my Lords, — will Pest say to the Justiciary bodies, — my Lords, the Parliament House is Peebles's place of dwelling, says he — being *commune forum*, and *commune forum est commune domicilium* — Lass, fetch another glass of whisky, and score it — time to gae hame — by the practice, I cannot find the jug — yet there's twa of them, I think. By the Regiam, Fairford — Daddie Fairford — lend us twal pennies to buy sneeshing, mine is done — Maecor, call another cause."

The box fell from his hands, and his body would at the same time have fallen from the chair, had not I supported him.

"This is intolerable," said my father — "Call a chairman, James Wilkinson, to carry this degraded, worthless, drunken beast home."

When Peter Peebles was removed from this memorable consultation, under the care of an able-bodied Celt, my father hastily bundled up the papers, as a showman, whose exhibition has miscarried, hastes to remove his booth. "Here are my memoranda, Alan," he said, in a hurried way; "look them carefully over — compare them with the processes, and turn it in your head before Tuesday. Many a good speech has been made for a beast of a client; and hark ye, lad, hark ye — I never intended to cheat you of your fee when all was done, though I would have liked to have heard the speech first; but there is nothing like coming the home before the journey. Here are five good guineas in a silk purse — of your poor mother's netting, Alan — she would have been a blithe woman to have seen her young son with a gown on his back — but no more of that — he's good boy, and to the work like a tiger."

I did set to work, Darsid; for who could resist

such motives! With my father's assistance, I have mastered the details, confused as they are; and on Tuesday, I shall plead as well for Peter Peebles, as I could for a duke. Indeed, I feel my head so clear on the subject, as to be able to write this long letter to you; into which, however, Peter and his lawsuit have insinuated themselves so far, as to shew you how much they at present occupy my thoughts. Once more, be careful of yourself, and mindful of sue, who am ever thine, while

ALAN FAIRFORD.

From circumstances, to be hereafter mentioned, it was long ere this letter reached the person to whom it was addressed.

CHAPTER I.

NARRATIVE.

THE advantage of laying before the reader, in the words of the actors themselves, the adventures which we must otherwise have narrated in our own, has given great popularity to the publication of epistolary correspondence, as practised by various great authors, and by ourselves in the preceding chapters. Nevertheless, a genuine correspondence of this kind (and Heaven forbid it should be in any respect sophisticated by interpolations of our own!) can seldom be found to contain all in which it is necessary to instruct the reader for his full comprehension of the story. Also it must often happen that various prolixities and redundancies occur in the course of an interchange of letters, which must hang as a dead weight on the progress of the narrative. To avoid this dilemma, some biographers have used the letters of the personages concerned, or liberal extracts from them, to describe particular incidents, or express the sentiments which they entertained; while they connect them occasionally with such portions of narrative, as may serve to carry on the thread of the story.

It is thus that the adventurous travellers who explore the summit of Mont Blanc, now move on through the crumbling snow-drift so slowly, that their progress is almost imperceptible, and anon abridge their journey by springing over the intervening chasms which cross their path, with the assistance of their pilgrim-staves. Or, to make a briefer simile, the course of story-telling which we have for the present adopted, resembles the original discipline of the dragoon, who were trained to serve either on foot or horseback, as the emergencies of the service required. With this explanation, we shall proceed to narrate some circumstances which Alan Fairford did not, and could not, write to his correspondent.

Our reader, we trust, has formed somewhat approaching to a distinct idea of the principal characters who have appeared before him during our narrative; but in case our good opinion of his sagacity has been exaggerated, and in order to satisfy such as are addicted to the laudable practice of *shipping*, (with whom we have as times a strong fellow-feeling,) the following particulars may not be superfluous.

Mr Saunders Fairford, as he was usually called,

was a man of business of the old school, moderate in his charges, economical and even niggardly in his expenditure, strictly honest in conducting his own affairs, and those of his clients, but taught by long experience to be wary and suspicious in observing the motions of others. Punctual, as the clock of Saint Giles tolled nine, the neat dapper form of the little hale old gentleman was seen at the threshold of the Court hall, or at farthest, at the head of the Back Stairs, trimly dressed in a complete suit of snuff-coloured brown, with stockings of silk or woollen, as suited the weather; a bob-wig, and a small cocked hat; shoes blacked as Warren would have blacked them; silver shoe-buckles, and a gold stock-buckle. A noddy in summer, and a sprig of holly in winter, completed his well-known dress and appearance. His manners corresponded with his attire, for they were scrupulously civil, and not a little formal. He was an elder of the kirk, and, of course, zealous for King George and the government even to slaying, as he had showed by taking up arms in their cause. But then, as he had clients and connections of business among families of opposite political tenets, he was particularly cautious to use all the conventional phrases which the civility of the time had devised, as an admissible mode of language betwixt the two parties. Thus he spoke sometimes of the Chevalier, but never either of the Prince, which would have been sacrificing his own principles, & of the Pretender, which would have been offensive to those of others. Again, he usually designated the Rebellion as the *affair* of 1745, and spoke of any one engaged in it as a person who had been out at a certain period. So that, on the whole, Mr Fairford was a man much liked and respected on all sides, though his friends would not have been sorry if he had given a dinner more frequently, as his little cellar contained some choice old wine, of which, on such rare occasions, he was no niggard.

The whole pleasure of this good old-fashioned man of method, besides that which he really felt in the discharge of his daily business, was the hope to see his son Alan, the only fruit of a union which death early dissolved, attain what in the father's eyes was the proudest of all distinctions — the rank and fame of a well-employed lawyer.

Every profession has its peculiar honours, and Mr Fairford's mind was constructed upon so limited and exclusive a plan, that he valued nothing, save the objects of ambition which his own presented. He would have shuddered at Alan's acquiring the renown of a hero, and laughed with scorn at the equally barren laurels of literature; it was by the path of the law alone that he was desirous to see him rise to eminence, and the probabilities of success or disappointment were the thoughts of his father by day, and his dream by night.

The disposition of Alan Fairford, as well as his talents, were such as to encourage his father's expectations. He had, instead of intellect, joined to habits of long and patient study, improved no doubt by the discipline of his father's house; to which, generally speaking, he conformed with the utmost docility, expressing no wish for greater or more frequent relaxation than consisted with his father's anxious and severe restrictions. When he did

indulge in any juvenile frolics, his father had the candour to lay the whole blame upon his most mercurial companion, Darsie Latimer.

This youth, as the reader must be aware, had been received as an inmate into the family of Mr Fairford, senior, at a time when some of the delicacy of constitution which had abridged the life of his consort, began to shew itself in the son, and when the father was, of course, peculiarly disposed to indulge his slightest wish. That the young Englishman was able to pay a considerable board, was a matter of no importance to Mr Fairford, it was enough that his presence seemed to make his son cheerful and happy. He was compelled to allow that "Darsie was a fine lad, though unsettled," and he would have had some difficulty in getting rid of him, and the apprehensions which his levities excited, had it not been for the voluntary excursion which gave rise to the preceding correspondence, and in which Mr Fairford secretly rejoiced, as affording the means of separating Alan from his gay companion, at least until he should have assumed, and become accustomed to, the duties of his dry and laborious profession.

But the absence of Darsie was far from promoting the end which the elder Mr Fairford had expected and desired. The young men were united by the closest bonds of intimacy; and the more so, that neither of them sought nor desired to admit any others into their society. Alan Fairford was averse to general company, from a disposition naturally reserved, and Darsie Latimer from a painful sense of his own unknown origin, peculiarly afflicting in a country where high and low are professed genealogists. The young men were all in all to each other; it is no wonder, therefore, that their separation was painful, and that its effects upon Alan Fairford, joined to the anxiety occasioned by the tenor of his friend's letters, greatly exceeded what the senior had anticipated. The young man went through his usual duties, his studies, and the examinations to which he was subjected, but with nothing like the zeal and assiduity which he had formerly displayed; and his anxious and observant father saw but too plainly that his heart was with his absent comrade.

A philosopher would have given way to this tide of feeling, in hopes to have diminished its excess, and permitted the youths to have been some time together, that their intimacy might have been broken off by degrees; but Mr Fairford only saw the more direct mode of continued restraint, which, however, he was desirous of veiling under some plausible pretext. In the anxiety which he felt on this occasion, he had held communication with an old acquaintance, Peter Drudget, with whom the reader is partly acquainted. "Alan," he said, "was once wild, and aye waur; and he was expecting every moment when he would start off in a wildgoose-chase after the callant Latimer; Will Sampson, the horse-hirer in Candlemaker-Row, had given him a hint that Alan had been looking for a good hack, to go to the country for a few days. And then to oppose him downright — he could not but think on the way his poor mother was removed — Would to Heaven he was yoked to some tight piece of business, no matter whether well or ill paid, but some job that would halsahackle him at least until the Courts rose, if it were but for decency's sake."

1 See Note M. *The Rebellion as the Affair of 1745.*

Peter Drudgeit sympathized, for Peter had a son, who, reason or none, would needs exchange the torn and inkly fustian sleeves for the blue jacket and white lapelle; and he suggested, as the reader knows, the engaging our friend Alan in the matter of Poor Peter Peebles, just opened by the desertion of young Dumtonstie, whose defection would be at the same time concealed; and this, Drudgeit said, "would be felling two dogs with one stone."

With these explanations, the reader will hold a man of the elder Fairford's sense and experience free from the hazardous and impatient curiosity with which boys fling a puppy into a deep pond, merely to see if the creature can swim. However confident in his son's talents, which were really considerable, he would have been very sorry to have involved him in the duty of pleading a complicated and difficult case, upon his very first appearance at the bar, had he not resorted to it as an effectual way to prevent the young man from taking a step, which his habits of thinking represented as a most fatal one at his outset of life.

Between two evils, Mr Fairford chose that which was in his own apprehension the least; and, like a brave officer sending forth his son to battle, rather chose he should die upon the breach, than desert the conflict with dishonour. Neither did he leave him to his own unassisted energies. Like Alpheus preceding Hercules, he himself encountered the Augean mass of Peter Peebles's law-matters. It was to the old man a labour of love to place in a clear and undistorted view the real merits of this case, which the carelessness and blunders of Peter's former solicitors had converted into a huge chaotic mass of unintelligible technicality; and such was his skill and industry, that he was able, after the severe toil of two or three days, to present to the consideration of the young counsel the principal facts of the case, in a light equally simple and comprehensible. With the assistance of a solicitor so affectionate and indefatigable, Alan Fairford was enabled, when the day of trial arrived, to walk towards the Court, attended by his anxious yet encouraging parent, with some degree of confidence that he would lose no reputation upon this arduous occasion.

They were met at the door of the Court by poor Peter Peebles in his usual plenitude of wig and rebottle of hair. He seized on the young pleader like a lion on his prey. "How is it wi' you, Mr Alan—how is a' ye, man?—The awfy' day is come at last—a day that will be lang minded in this house. Poor Peter Peebles against Plain-stanes—conjoined processes—Hearing in presence—stands for the Short Boll for this day—I have not been able to sleep for a week for thinking of it, and, I dare to say, neither has the Lord President himself—for such a cause!! But your father garr'd me tak a wee drap ower muckle of his pint bottle the wither night; it's no right to mix brandy wi' business, Mr Fairford. I would have been the waurer liquor if I would have drank as muckle as you, for you would have had me. But there's a time for a' things, and if ye will dine with me after the case is heard, or while it is the same, or maybe better, I'll gang my ways home wi' you, and I wisna object to a cheerin' glass within the bounds of moderation."

Old Fairford shrugged his shoulders and hurried past the client, saw his son vault in the sable bon-

netage, which, in his eyes, was more venerable than an archbishop's lawn, and could not help fondly patting his shoulder, and whispering to him to take courage, and shew he was worthy to wear it. The party entered the Outer Hall of the Court, (once the place of meeting of the ancient Scottish Parliament,) and which corresponds to the use of Westminster Hall in England, serving as a vestibule to the Inner-House, as it is termed, and a place of dominion to certain ordinary personages called Lords Ordinary.

The earlier part of the morning was spent by old Fairford in reiterating his instructions to Alan, and in running from one person to another, from whom he thought he could still glean some grains of information, either concerning the point at issue, or collateral cases. Meantime, Poor Peter Peebles, whose shallow brain was altogether unable to bear the importance of the moment, kept as close to his young counsel as shadow to substance, affected now to speak loud, now to whisper in his ear, now to dook his ghastly countenance with wretched smiles, now to cloud it with a shade of deep and solemn importance, and anon to comfort it with the sneer of scorn and derision. These moods of the client's mind were accompanied with singular "mooings and mowings," fantastic gestures, which the man of rage and litigation deemed appropriate to his changes of countenance. Now he brandished his arm aloft, now thrust his fist straight out, as if to knock his opponent down. Now he laid his open palm on his bosom, and now flinging it abroad, he gallantly snapped his fingers in the air.

These demonstrations, and the obvious shame and embarrassment of Alan Fairford, did not escape the observation of the juvenile idlers in the hall. They did not, indeed, approach Peter with their usual familiarity, from some feeling of deference towards Fairford, though many accused him of conceit in presuming to undertake, at this early stage of his practice, a case of considerable difficulty. But Alan, notwithstanding this forbearance, was not the less sensible that he and his companion were the subjects of many a passing jest, and many a shout of laughter, with which that region at all times abounds.

At length the young counsel's patience gave way, and as it threatened to carry his presence of mind and recollection along with it, Alan frankly told his father, that unless he was relieved from the infliction of his client's personal presence and instructions, he must necessarily throw up his brief, and decline pleading the case.

"Hush, hush, my dear Alan," said the old gentleman, almost at his own wit's end upon hearing this dilemma; "dinnered the silly no'er-do-well; we cannot keep the man from hearing his own cause, though he be not quite right in the head." "On my life, sir," answered Alan, "I shall be unable to go on, he drives every thing out of my remembrance; and if I attempt to speak seriously of the injuries he has sustained, and the condition he is reduced to, how can I expect but that the very appearance of such an absurd scarecrow will turn it all into ridicule?"

"There is something in that," said Saunders Fairford, glancing a look at Poor Peter, and then cautiously inserting his forefinger under his bow-tie, in order to rub his temple and aid his invention; "he is no figure for the fore-bar to see."

without laughing, but now to get rid of him? To speak sense, or any thing like it, is the last thing he will listen to. Stay, ay—Alan, my darling, have patience; I'll get him off on the instant, like a gowff ball."

So saying, he hastened to his ally, Peter Drudgeit, who on seeing him with marks of haste in his gait, and care upon his countenance, clapped his pen behind his ear, with "What's the stir now, Mr Saunders?—Is there aught wrang?"

"Here's a dollar, man," said Mr Saunders; "now, or never, Peter, do me a good turn. Yonder's your namesake, Peter Peebles, will drive the swine through our bonny hanks of yarn; get him over to John's Coffee-house, man—gie him his meridian—keep him there, drunk or sober, till the hearing is ower."

"Enough said," quoth Peter Drudgeit, no way displeased with his own share in the service required,—"We've do your bidding."

Accordingly, the scribe was presently seen whispering in the ear of Peter Peebles, whose responses came forth in the following broken form:—

"Leave the Court for ae minute on this great day of judgment?—not I, by the Reg—Eh! what! Brandy, did ye say—French Brandy?—couldna ye fetch a stup to the bar under your coat, man?—Impossible! Na, if it's clean impossible, and if we have an hour good till they get through the single bill and the summar-roll, I carena if I cross the cloot wi' you; I am sure I need something to keep my heart up this awful day; but I'll no stay above an instant—not aboye a minute of time—nor drink aboon a single gill."

In a few minutes afterwards, the two Peters were seen moving through the Parliament Close, (which new-fangled affectation has termed a Square,) the triumphant Drudgeit leading captive the passive Peebles whose legs conducted him towards the drumshop, while his reverted eyes were fixed upon the court. They dived into the Cimimerian abysses of John's coffee-house,¹ formerly the favourite rendezvous of the classical and genial Doctor Pitcairn, and were for the present seen no more.

Relieved from his tormentor, Alan Fairford had time to rally his recollections, which in the irritation of his spirits, had neatly escaped him, and to prepare himself for a task, the successful discharge or failure in which must, he was aware, have the deepest influence upon his fortunes. He had pride, was not without a consciousness of talent, and the sense of his father's feelings upon the subject impelled him to the utmost exertion. Above all, he had that sort of self-command which is essential to success in every arduous undertaking, and he was constitutionally free from that feverish irritability, by which those whose over-active imaginations exaggerate difficulties, render themselves incapable of encountering such when they arrive.

Having collected all the scattered and broken associations which were necessary, Alan's thoughts reverted to Dumfriesshire, and the precarious situation in which he feared his beloved friend had placed himself; and once and again he consulted his

watch, eager to have his present task commenced, and ended, that he might hasten to Darnie's assistance. The hour and moment at length arrived: The Macer shouted, with all his well-remembered brassen strength of lungs, "Poor Peter Peebles wrek! Plainstane, per Dumtoustie & Tough!—Maister Da-niel Dumtoustie!" Dumtoustie answered not the summons, which, deep and swelling as it was, could not reach across the Queensferry; but our Maister Alan Fairford appeared in his place.

The Court was very much crowded; for much amusement had been received on former occasions when Peter had volunteered his own oratory, and had been completely successful in routing the gravity of the whole procedure, and putting to silence, not indeed the counsel of the opposite party, but his own.

Both bench and audience seemed considerably surprised at the juvenile appearance of the young man who appeared in the room of Dumtoustie, for the purpose of opening this complicated and long depending process, and the common herd were disappointed at the absence of Peter the client, the Punchinello of the expected entertainment. The Judges looked with a very favourable countenance on our friend Alan, most of them being acquainted, more or less, with so old a practitioner as his father, and all, or almost all, affording, from civility, the same fair play to the first pleading of a counsel, which the House of Commons yields to the maiden speech of one of its members.

Lord Bladderskate was an exception to this general expression of benevolence. He scowled upon Alan, from beneath his large, shaggy, gray eye-brows, just as if the young lawyer had been usurping his nephew's honours, instead of covering his disgrace; and, from feelings which did his lordship little honour, he privately hoped the young man would not succeed in the cause which his kinsman had abandoned.

Even Lord Bladderskate, however, was, in spite of himself, pleased with the judicious and modest tone in which Alan began his address to the Court, apologizing for his own presumption, and excusing it, by the sudden illness of his learned brother, for whom the labour of opening a cause of some difficulty and importance had been much more worthily designed. He spoke of himself as he really was, and of young Dumtoustie as what he ought to have been, taking care not to dwell on either topic a moment longer than was necessary. The old Judge's looks became benign; his family pride was propitiated, and, pleased equally with the modesty and civility of the young man whom he had thought forward and officious, he relaxed the scorn of his features into an expression of profound attention; the highest compliment, and the greatest encouragement, which a judge can render to the counsel addressing him.

Having succeeded in securing the favourable attention of the Court, the young lawyer, using the lights which his father's experience and knowledge of business had afforded him, proceeded with an address and clearness, unexpected from one of his years, to remove from the case itself those complicated formalities with which it had been loaded, as a surgeon strips from a wound the dressings which have been hastily wrapped round it, in order to proceed to his cure, *cum sanum erit*. Developed of the cumbrous and complicated technicalities of

¹ The simile is obvious, from the old manuscript of Scott, where the wife's thrill, as the yarn wrought in the winter was called, when laid down to bleach by the turn-side, was peculiarly exposed to the insults of pigs, seldom well regulated about a Scottish farm-house.

² See Note N. *John's Coffee-House*.

litigation, with which the perverse obstinacy of the client, the inconsiderate haste or ignorance of his agents, and the evasions of a shrewd adversary, had invested the process, the cause of Poor Peter Peebles, standing upon its simple merits, was no bad subject for the declamation of a young counsel, nor did our friend Alan fail to avail himself of its strong points.

He exhibited his client as a simple-hearted, honest, well-meaning man, who, during a copartnership of twelve years, had gradually become impoverished, while his partner, (his former clerk,) having no funds but his share of the same business, into which he had been admitted without any advance of stock, had become gradually more and more wealthy.

"Their association," said Alan, and the little slight was received with some applause, "resembled the ancient story of the fruit which was carved with a knife poisoned on one side of the blade only, so that the individual to whom the envenomed portion was served, drew decay and death from what afforded savour and sustenance to the consumer of the other moiety." He then plunged boldly into the *mare magnum* of accounts between the parties; he pursued each false statement from the waste-book to the day-book, from the day-book to the bill-book, from the bill-book to the ledger; placed the artful interpolations and insertions of the fallacious Plainstanes in array against each other, and against the fact; and availing himself to the utmost of his father's previous labours and his own knowledge of accounts, in which he had been sedulously trained, he laid before the Court a clear and intelligible statement of the affairs of the copartnership, shewing, with precision, that a large balance must, at the dissolution, have been due to his client, sufficient to have enabled him to have carried on business on his own account, and thus to have retained his situation in society, as an independent and industrious tradesman. But instead of this justice being voluntarily rendered, by the former clerk to his former master, — by the party obliged to his benefactor, — by one honest man to another, — his wretched client had been compelled to follow his quondam clerk, his present debtor, from Court to Court; had found his just claims met with well-invented but unfounded counter-claims, had seen his party shift his character of pursuer or defender, as often as Harlequin effects his transformations, till, in a chase so varied and so long, the unhappy litigant had lost substance, reputation, and almost the use of reason itself, and came before their Lordships an object of thoughtless derision to the unreflecting, of compassion to the better-hearted, and of awful meditation to every one, who considered that, in a country where excellent laws were administered by upright and incorruptible judges, a man might pursue an almost indisputable claim through all the mazes of litigation; lose fortune, reputation, and reason itself in the chase, and now come before the Supreme Court of his country in the wretched condition of his unhappy client, a victim to protracted justice, and to that hope delayed which sickens the heart."

The force of this appeal to feeling made as much impression on the Bench, as had been previously effected by the clearness of Alan's argument. The absurd form of Peter himself, with his tow-wig, was fortunately not present to excite any ludicrous

emotion, and the pause that took place when the young lawyer had concluded his speech, was followed by a murmur of approbation, which the ear of his father drank in as the sweetest sounds that had ever entered them. Many a hand of gratulation was thrust out to his grasp, trembling as it was with anxiety, and finally with delight; his voice faltering as he replied, "Ay, ay, I kene Alan was the lad to make a spoon or spoil a horse."

The counsel on the other side arose, an old practitioner, who had noted too closely the impression made by Alan's pleading, not to fear the consequences of an immediate decision. He paid the highest compliments to his very young brother — "the Benjamin, as he would presume to call him, of the learned Faculty — said the alleged hardships of Mr Peebles were compensated, by his being placed in a situation where the benevolence of their Lordships had assigned him gratuitously, such assistance as he might not otherwise have obtained at a high price — and allowed his young brother had put many things in such a new point of view, that, although he was quite certain of his ability to refute them, he was honestly desirous of having a few hours to arrange his answer, in order to be able to follow Mr Fairford from point to point. He had farther to observe, there was one point of the case to which his brother, whose attention had been otherwise so wonderfully comprehensive, had not given the consideration which he expected; it was founded on the interpretation of certain correspondence which had passed betwixt the parties soon after the dissolution of the copartnership."

The Court having heard Mr. Tough, readily allowed him two days for preparing himself, hinting at the same time, that he might find his task difficult, and affording the young counsel, with high encomiums upon the mode in which he had acquitted himself, the choice of speaking, either now or at the next calling of the cause, upon the point which Plainstanes's lawyer had adverted to.

Alan modestly apologized for what in fact had been an omission very pardonable in so complicated a case, and professed himself instantly ready to go through that correspondence, and prove that it was in form and substance exactly applicable to the view of the case he had submitted to their Lordships. He applied to his father, who sat behind him, to hand him, from time to time, the letters, in the order in which he meant to read and comment upon them.

Old Counsellor Tough had probably formed an ingenious enough scheme to blunt the effect of the young lawyer's reasoning, by thus obliging him to follow up a process of reasoning, clear and complete in itself, by a hasty and extemporary appendix. If so, he seemed likely to be disappointed; for Alan was well prepared on this, as on other parts of the cause, and recommenced his pleading, with a degree of animation, which added force even to what he had formerly stated, and might perhaps have occasioned the old gentleman to regret his having again called him up; when his father, as he handed him the letters, put one into his hand which produced a singular effect on the pleader.

At the first glance, he saw that the paper had no reference to the affairs of Peter Peebles; but the first glance also shewed him, what, even at this

¹ Said of an adventurous gipsy, who resolves at all risks to convert a sheep's horn into a spoon.

time, and in that presence, he could not help reading; and which, being read, seemed totally to disconcert his ideas. He stopped short in his perambulation—gazed on the paper with a look of surprise and horror—uttered an exclamation, and flinging down the brief which he had in his hand, hurried out of court without returning a single word of answer to the various questions, “What was the matter?”—“Was he taken unwell?”—“Should not a chair be called?” &c. &c. &c.

The elder Mr Fairford, who remained seated, and looking as senseless as if he had been made of stone, was at length recalled to himself by the anxious inquiries of the judges and the counsel after his son's health. He then rose with an air, in which was mingled the deep habitual reverence in which he held the Court, with some internal cause of agitation, and with difficulty mentioned something of a mistake—a piece of bad news—Alan, he hoped, would be well enough to-morrow. But unable to proceed farther, he clasped his hands together, exclaiming, “My son! my son!” and left the court hastily, as if in pursuit of him.

“What's the matter with the auld bitch next?” said an acute metaphysical judge, though somewhat coarse in his manners, aside to his brethren. “This is a daff case, Bladderskate—first, it drives the poor man mad that aught it—then, your neevy goes daff with fright, and flies the pit—then this smart young hopeful is aff the hooks with too hard study, I fancy—and now auld Saunders Fairford is as lunatic as the best of them. What say ye till't, ye bitch!”

“Nothing, my lord,” answered Bladderskate, much too formal to admire the levities in which his philosophical brother sometimes indulged—“I say nothing, but pray to Heaven to keep our own wits.”

“Amen, amen,” answered his learned brother; “for some of us have but few to spare.”

The Court then arose, and the audience departed, greatly wondering at the talent displayed by Alan Fairford at his first appearance in a case so difficult and so complicated, and assigning an hundred conjectural causes, each different from the others, for the singular interruption which had clouded his day of success. The worst of the whole was, that six agents, who had each come to the separate resolution of thrusting a retaining fee into Alan's hand as he left the court, shook their heads as they returned the money into their leathern pouches, and said, “that the lad was clever, but they would like to see more of him before they engaged him in the way of business—they did not like his louping away like a flea in a blanket.”

CHAPTER II.

HAD OUR friend Alexander Fairford known the consequences of his son's abrupt retreat from the Court, which are mentioned in the end of the last chapter, it might have accomplished the prediction of the lively old judge, and driven him utterly distracted. As it was, he was miserable enough. His son had risen ten degrees higher in his estimation

than ever, by his display of juridical talents, which seemed to assure him that the applause of the judges and professors of the law, which, in his estimation, was worth that of all mankind besides, authorized to the fullest extent the advantageous estimate which even his parental partiality had been induced to form of Alan's powers. On the other hand, he felt that he was himself a little humbled, from a disguise which he had practised towards this son of his hopes and wishes.

The truth was, that on the morning of this eventful day, Mr Alexander Fairford had received from his correspondent and friend, Provost Crosbie of Dumfries, a letter of the following tenor:

“DEAR SIR,

“YOUR respected favour of 25th ultimo, per favour of Mr Larnie Latimer, reached me in safety, and I shewed to the young gentleman such attentions as he was pleased to accept of. The object of my present writing is twofold. First, the council are of opinion that you should now begin to stir in the thirlage cause; and they think they will be able, from evidence *noviter reportata*, to enable you to amend your condescendence upon the use and wont of the burgh, touching the *grana inverta et illata*. So you will please consider yourself as authorized to speak to Mr Pest, and lay before him the papers which you will receive by the coach. The council think that a fee of two guineas may be sufficient on this occasion, as Mr Pest had three for drawing the original condescendence.

“I take the opportunity of adding, that there has been a great riot among the Solway fishermen, who have destroyed, in a masterful manner, the stake-nets set up near the mouth of this river; and have besides attacked the house of Quaker Geddes, one of the principal partners of the Tide-net Fishing Company, and done a great deal of damage. Am sorry to add, young Mr Latimer was in the fray, and has not since been heard of. Murder is spoke of, but that may be a word of course. As the young gentleman has behaved rather oddly while in these parts, as in declining to dine with me more than once, and going about the country with strolling fiddlers and such like, I rather hope that his present absence is only occasioned by a frolic; but as his servant has been making inquiries of me respecting his master, I thought it best to acquaint you in course of post. I have only to add, that our sheriff has taken a precognition, and committed one or two of the rioters. If I can be useful in this matter, either by advertising for Mr Latimer as missing, publishing a reward, or otherwise, I will obey your respected instructions, being your most obedient to command,

“WILLIAM CROSBIE.”

When Mr Fairford received this letter, and had read it to an end, his first idea was to communicate it to his son, that an express might be instantly despatched for a King's messenger sent with proper authority to search after his late guest.

The habits of the fishers were rude, as he well knew, though not absolutely sanguinary or ferocious; and there had been instances of their transporting persons who had interfered in their smuggling trade to the Isle of Man, and elsewhere, and keeping them under restraint for many weeks. On this account, Mr Fairford was naturally led to feel anxiety concerning the fate of his late inmate;

* Tradition ascribes this whimsical style of language to the ingenious and philosophical Lord Kames.

and, at a less interesting moment, would certainly have set out himself, or licensed his son to go in pursuit of his friend.

But, alas! he was both a father and an agent. In the one capacity, he looked on his son as dearer to him than all the world besides; in the other, the lawsuit which he conducted was to him like an infant to its nurse, and the case of Poor Peter Peebles against Plainstones was, he saw, adjourned, perhaps *sine die*, should this document reach the hands of his son. The mutual and enthusiastical affection betwixt the young men was well known to him; and he concluded, that if the precarious state of Latimer were made known to Alan Fairford, it would render him not only unwilling, but totally unfit, to discharge the duty of the day, to which the old gentleman attached such ideas of importance.

On mature reflection, therefore, he resolved, though not without some feelings of compunction, to delay communicating to his son the disagreeable intelligence which he had received, until the business of the day should be ended. The delay, he persuaded himself, could be of little consequence to Darsie Latimer, whose folly, he dared to say, had led him into some scraps which would meet an appropriate punishment, in some accidental restraint, which would be thus prolonged for only a few hours longer. Besides, he would have time to speak to the Sheriff of the county—perhaps to the King's Advocate—and set about the matter in a regular manner, or, as he termed it, as summing up the duties of a solicitor, to *aye as accords*!

The scheme, as we have seen, was partially successful, and was only ultimately defeated, as he confessed to himself with shame, by his own very unbusiness-like mistake of shuffling the Provost's letter, in the hurry and anxiety of the morning, among some papers belonging to Peter Peebles's affairs, and then handing it to his son, without observing the blunder. He used to protest, even till the day of his death, that he never had been guilty of such an inaccuracy as giving a paper out of his hand without looking at the docketing, except on that unhappy occasion, when, of all others, he had such particular reason to regret his negligence.

Disturbed by these reflections, the old gentleman had, for the first time in his life, some disinclination, arising from shame and vexation, to face his own son; so that to protract for a little the meeting, which he feared would be a painful one, he went to wait upon the Sheriff-depute, who he found had set off for Dumfries, in great haste, to superintend in person the investigation which had been set on foot by his Substitutor. This gentleman's clerk could say little on the subject of the riot, excepting that it had been serious, much damage done to property, and some personal violence offered to individuals; but, as far as he had yet heard, no lives lost on the spot.

Mr Fairford was compelled to return home with this intelligence; and on inquiring at James Wilkinson where his son was, received for answer, that "Master Alan was in his own room, and very busy."

"We must have our explanation over," said Saunders Fairford to himself. "Better a finger off,

as aye wagging!" and going to the door of his son's apartment, he knocked at first gently—then more loudly—but received no answer. Somewhat alarmed at this silence, he opened the door of the chamber—it was empty—clothes lay mixed in confusion with the law-books and papers, as if the inmate had been engaged in hastily packing for a journey. As Mr Fairford looked around in alarm, his eye was arrested by a sealed letter lying upon his son's writing-table, and addressed to himself. It contained the following words:—

"MY DEAREST FATHER,

"You will not, I trust, be surprised, nor perhaps very much displeased, to learn that I am on my way to Dumfries-shire, to learn, by my own personal investigation, the present state of my dear friend, and afford him such relief as may be in my power, and which, I trust, will be effectual. I do not presume to reflect upon you, dearest sir, for concealing from me information of so much consequence to my peace of mind and happiness; but I hope your having done so will be, if not an excuse, at least some mitigation of my present offence, in taking a step of consequence without consulting your pleasure; and, I must farther own, under circumstances which perhaps might lead to your disapprobation of my purpose. I can only say, in farther apology, that if any thing unhappy, which Heaven forbid I shall have occurred to the person who, next to yourself, is dearest to me in this world, I shall have on my heart, as a subject of eternal regret, that being in a certain degree warned of his danger, and furnished with the means of obviating it, I did not instantly hasten to his assistance, but preferred giving my attention to the business of this unlucky morning. No view of personal distinction, nothing, indeed, short of your earpest and often expressed wishes, could have detained me in town till this day; and having made this sacrifice to filial duty, I trust you will hold me excused, if I now obey the calls of friendship and humanity. Do not be in the least anxious on my account; I shall know, I trust, how to conduct myself with due caution in any emergency which may occur, otherwise my legal studies for so many years have been to little purpose. I am fully provided with money, and also with arms, in case of need; but you may rely on my prudence in avoiding all occasions of using the latter, short of the last necessity. God Almighty bless you, my dearest father! I and grant that you may forgive the first, and, I trust, the last act approaching towards premeditated disobedience, of which I either have now, or shall hereafter have, to accuse myself. I remain, till death, your dutiful and affectionate son,

ALAN FAIRFORD."

"P.S.—I shall write with the utmost regularity, acquainting you with my motions, and requesting your advice. I trust my stay will be very short, and I think it possible that I may bring back Darsie along with me."

The paper dropped from the old man's hand when he was thus assured of the misfortune which he apprehended. His first idea was to get a post-chaise and pursue the fugitive; but he recollected, that, upon the very rare occasions when Alan had shewn himself indocile to the *patria potestas*, his

1 A Scots law phrase, of no very determinate import, meaning, generally, to do what is fitting.

natural ease and gentleness of disposition seemed hardened into obstinacy, and that now, entitled, as arrived at the years of majority, and a member of the learned Faculty, to direct his own motions, there was great doubt, whether, in the event of his overtaking his son, he might be able to prevail upon him to return back. In such a risk of failure, he thought it wiser to desist from his purpose, especially as even his success in such a pursuit would give a ridiculous *ecclat* to the whole affair, which could not be otherwise than prejudicial to his son's rising character.

Bitter, however, were Saunders Fairford's reflections, as again picking up the fatal scroll, he threw himself into his son's leathern easy-chair, and bestowed upon it a disjointed commentary. "Bring back Darsie! little doubt of that—the bad shilling is sure enough to come back again. I wish Darsie no worse ill than that he were carried where the silly fool, Alan, should never see him again. It was an ill hour that he darkened my doors in, for, ever since that, Alan has given up his ain old-fashioned mother-wit, for the tother's caper-notted maggots an nonsense.—Provided with money! you must have more than I know of, then, my friend, for I trow I kept you pretty short, for your own good.—Can he have gotten more fees? or, does he think five guineas has neither beginning nor end?—Arms! What would he do with arms, or what would any man do with them that is not a regular soldier under government, or else a thief-taker? I have had enough of arms, I trow, although I carried them for King George and the government. But this is a worse trait than Falkirk-field yet.—God guide us, we are poor inconsistent creatures! To think the lad should have made so able an appearance, and then bolted off this gate, after a glaiiket ne'er-do-weel, like a hound upon a false scent!—Law-a-day! it's a sore thing to see a stunkard cow kick down the pail when it's roaming fon.—But, after all, it's an ill bird that defiles its ain nest. I must cover up the scandal, as well as I can.—What's the matter now, James?"

"A message, sir," said James Wilkinson, "from my Lord President; and he hopes Mr Alan is not seriously indisposed."

"From the Lord President! the Lord preserve us!—I'll send an answer this instant; bid the lad sit down, and ask him to drink, James.—Let me see," continued he, taking a sheet of gilt paper, "how we are to draw our answers."

Ere his pen had touched the paper, James was in the room again.

"What now, James?"

"Lord Bladderskate's lad is come to ask how Mr Alan is, as he left the Court——"

"Ay, ay," answered Saunders, bitterly; "he has e'en made a moonlight flitting, like my lord's ain nevy."

"Shall I say so, sir?" said James, who, as an old soldier, was literal in all things touching the service.

"The devil! no, no!—Bid the lad sit down and taste our ale. I will write his lordship an answer."

Once more the gilt paper was resumed, and once more the door was opened by James.

"Lord——sends his servitor to ask after Mr Alan."

"Oh, the deevil take their civility!" said poor

Saunders. "Set him down to drink too—I will write to his lordship."

"The lads will bide your pleasure, sir, as long as I keep the bicker fou; but this ringing is like wear out the bell, I think; there are they at it again."

He answered the fresh summons accordingly, and came back to inform Mr Fairford, that the Dean of Faculty was below, inquiring for Mr Alan.—"Will I set him down to drink, too?" said James.

"Will you be an idiot, sir?" said Mr Fairford. "Shew Mr Dean into the parlour."

In going slowly down stairs, step by step, the perplexed man of business had time enough to reflect, that if it be possible to put a fair gloss upon a true story, the verity always serves the purpose better than any substitute which ingenuity can devise. He therefore told his learned visitor, that although his son had been incommoded by the heat of the court, and the long train of hard study, by day and night, preceding his exertions, yet he had fortunately so far recovered, as to be in condition to obey upon the instant a sudden summons which had called him to the country, on a matter of life and death.

"It should be a serious snatter indeed that takes my young friend away at this moment," said the good-natured Dean. "I wish he had stayed to finish his pleading, and put down old Tough. Without compliment, Mr Fairford, it was as fine a first appearance as I ever heard of. I should be sorry your son did not follow it up in a reply. Nothing like striking while the iron is hot."

Mr Saunders Fairford made a bitter grimace as he acquiesced in an opinion which was indeed decidedly his own; but he thought it most prudent to reply, "that the affair which rendered his son Alan's presence in the country absolutely necessary, regarded the affairs of a young gentleman of great fortune, who was a particular friend of Alan's, and who never took any material step in his affairs, without consulting his counsel learned in the law."

"Well, well, Mr Fairford, you know best," answered the learned Dean; "if there be death or marriage in life case, a will or a wedding is to be preferred to all other business. I am happy Mr Alan is so much recovered as to be able for travel, and wish you a very good morning."

Having thus taken his ground to the Dean of Faculty, Mr Fairford hastily wrote cards in answer to the inquiry of the three judges, accounting for Alan's absence in the same manner. These, being properly sealed and addressed, he delivered to James, with directions to dismiss the parti-coloured gentry, who, in the meanwhile, had consumed a gallon of twopenny ale, while discussing points of law, and addressing each other by their masters' titles.

The exertion which these matters demanded, and the interest which so many persons of legal distinction appeared to have taken in his son, greatly relieved the oppressed spirit of Saunders Fairford, who continued to talk mysteriously of the very important business which had interfered with his son's attendance during the brief remainder of the session. He endeavoured to lay the same unction to his own heart; but here the application was less fortunate, for his conscience told him, that no end

however important, which could be achieved in Darnie Latimer's affairs, could be balanced against the reputation which Alan was like to forfeit, by asserting the cause of Poor Peter Peebles.

In the meanwhile, although the haze which surrounded the cause, or causes, of that unfortunate litigant had been for a time dispelled by Alan's eloquence, like a fog by the thunder of artillery, yet it seemed once more to settle down upon the mass of litigation, thick as the palpable darkness of Egypt, at the very sound of Mr Tough's voice, who, on the second day after Alan's departure, was heard in answer to the opening counsel. Deep-mouthed, long-breathed, and pertinacious, taking a pinch of snuff betwixt every sentence, which otherwise seemed interminable—the veteran pleader prosed over all the themes which had been treated so luminously by Fairford; he quietly and imperceptibly replaced all the rubbish which the other had cleared away; and succeeded in restoring the veil of obscurity and unintelligibility which had for many years darkened the case of Peebles against Plainstones; and the matter was once more hung up by a remit to an accountant, with instruction to report before answer. So different a result from that which the public had been led to expect from Alan's speech, gave rise to various speculations.

The client himself opined, that it was entirely owing, first, to his own absence during the first day's pleading, being, as he said, debosbed with brandy, usquebaugh, and other strong waters, at John's Coffee-house, *per ambages* of Peter Drudgeit, employed to that effect by and through the device, counsel, and covyns of Saunders Fairford, his agent, or pretended agent. Secondly, by the flight and voluntary desertion of the younger Fairford, the advocate; on account of which, he served both father and son with a petition and complaints against them, for malversation in office. So that the apparent and most probable issue of this cause seemed to menace the melancholy Mr Saunders Fairford with additional subject for plague and mortification; which was the more galling, as his conscience told him that the case was really given away, and that a very brief resumption of the former argument, with reference to the necessary authorities and points of evidence, would have enabled Alan, by the mere breath, as it were, of his mouth, to blow away the various cobwebs with which Mr Tough had again invested the proceedings. But it went, he said, just like a decretet in absence, and was lost for want of a contradicteur.

In the meanwhile, nearly a week passed over without Mr Fairford hearing a word directly from his son. He learned, indeed, by a letter from Mr Crosbie, that the young counsellor had safely reached Dumfries, but had left that town upon some ulterior researches, the purpose of which he had not communicated. The old man, thus left to suspense, and to mortifying recollections, deprived also of the domestic society to which he had been habituated, began to suffer in body as well as in mind. He had formed the determination of setting out in person for Dumfries-shire, when, after having been dogged, peevish, and snappish to his clerks and domestics, to an unusual and almost intolerable degree, the acrimonious humours settled in a himing-hot fit of the gout, which is a well-known tamer of the most forward spirits, and under whose discipline we shall, for the present, leave him, as the

continuation of this history assumes, with the next division, a form somewhat different from direct narrative, and epistolary correspondence, though partaking of the character of both.

CHAPTER III.

JOURNAL OF DARNIE LATIMER.

(The following Address is written on the inside of the envelope which contained the Journal.)

INTO what hands soever these leaves may fall, they will instruct him, during a certain time at least, in the history of the life of an unfortunate young man, who, in the heart of a free country, and without any crime being laid to his charge, has been, and is, subjected to a course of unlawful and violent restraint. He who opens this letter, is therefore conjured to apply to the nearest magistrate, and, following such indications as the papers may afford, to exert himself for the relief of one, who, while he possesses every claim to assistance which oppressed innocence can give, has, at the same time, both the inclination and the means of being grateful to his deliverers. Or, if the person obtaining these letters shall want courage or means to effect the writer's release, he is, in that case, conjured, by every duty of a man to his fellow mortals, and of a Christian towards one who professes the same holy faith, to take the speediest measures for conveying them with speed and safety to the hands of Alan Fairford, Esq., Advocate, residing in the family of his father, Alexander Fairford, Esq., Writer to the Signet, Brown's Square, Edinburgh. He may be assured of a liberal reward, besides the consciousness of having discharged a real duty to humanity.

MY DEAREST ALAN,

FEELING as warmly towards you in doubt and in distress, as I ever did in the brightest days of our intimacy, it is to you whom I address a history which may perhaps fall into very different hands. A portion of my former spirit descends to my pen, when I write your name, and indulging the happy thought that you may be my deliverer from my present uncomfortable and alarming situation, as you have been my guide and counsellor on every former occasion, I will subdue the dejection which would otherwise overwhelm me. Therefore, as Heaven knows, I have time enough to write, I will endeavour to pour my thoughts out, as fully and freely as of old, though probably without the same gay and happy levity.

If the papers should reach other hands than yours, still I will not regret this exposure of my feelings; for, allowing for an ample share of the folly incidental to youth and inexperience, I fear not that I have much to be ashamed of in my narrative; nay, I even hope, that the open simplicity and frankness with which I am about to relate every singular and distressing circumstance, may prove even a stranger in my favour; and that, amid the multitude of seemingly trivial circumstances which I detail at length, a clue may be found to effect my liberation.

Another chance certainly remains—the Journal, as I may call it, may never reach the hands, either

of the dear friend to whom it is addressed, or those of an indifferent stranger, but may become the prey of the persons by whom I am at present treated as a prisoner. Let it be so — they will learn from it little but what they already know; that, as a man, and an Englishman, my soul revolts at the usage which I have received; that I am determined to essay every possible means to obtain my freedom; that captivity has not broken my spirit, and that, although they may doubtless complete their oppression by murder, I am still willing to bequeath my cause to the justice of my country. Undeterred, therefore, by the probability that my papers may be torn from me, and subjected to the inspection of one in particular, who, causelessly my enemy already, may be yet farther incensed at me for recording the history of my wrongs, I proceed to resume the history of events which have befallen me since the conclusion of my last letter to my dear Alan Fairford, dated, if I mistake not, on the 5th day of this still current month of August.

Upon the night preceding the date of that letter, I had been present, for the purpose of an idle frolic, at a dancing party at the village of Brokenburn, about six miles from Dumfries; many persons must have seen me there, should the fact appear of importance sufficient to require investigation. I danced, played on the violin, and took part in the festivity till about midnight, when my servant, Samuel Owen, brought me my horses, and I rode back to a small inn called Shepherd's Bush, kept by Mrs Gregson, which had been occasionally my residence for about a fortnight past. I spent the earlier part of the forenoon in writing a letter which I have already mentioned, to you, my dear Alan, and which, I think, you must have received in safety. Why did I not follow your advice, so often given me! Why did I linger in the neighbourhood of a danger, of which a kind voice had warned me! These are now unavailing questions; I was blinded by a fatality, and remained, fluttering like a moth around the candle, until I have been scorchèd to some purpose.

The greater part of the day had passed, and time hung heavy on my hands. I ought, perhaps, to blush at recollecting what has been often objected to me by the dear friend to whom this letter is addressed, viz. the facility with which I have, in moments of indolence, suffered my motions to be directed by any person who chanced to be near me, instead of taking the labour of thinking or deciding for myself. I had employed for some time, as a sort of guide and errand-boy, a lad named Benjamin, the son of one widow Coltherd, who lives near the Shepherd's Bush, and I cannot but remember that, upon several occasions, I had of late suffered him to possess more influence over my motions, than at all became the difference of our age and condition. At present, he exerted himself to persuade me that it was the finest possible sport to see the fish taken out from the nets and placed in the Solway at the reflux of the tide, and urged my going thither this evening so much, that, looking back on the whole circumstances, I cannot but think he had some especial motive for his conduct. These particulars I have mentioned, that if these papers fall into friendly hands, the boy may be sought after and submitted to examination.

His eloquence being unable to persuade me that I should take any pleasure in seeing the fruitless

struggles of the fish when left in the nets and asserted by the tide, he artfully suggested, that Mr and Miss Geddes, an respectable Quaker family, well known in the neighbourhood, and with whom I had contracted habits of intimacy, would possibly be offended if I did not make them an early visit. Both, he said, had been particularly inquiring the reasons of my leaving their house rather suddenly on the previous day. I resolved, therefore, to walk up to Mount Sharon and make my apologies; and I agreed to permit the boy to attend upon me, and wait my return from the house, that I might fish on my way homeward to Shepherd's Bush, for which amusement, he assured me, I would find the evening most favourable. I mention this minute circumstance, because I strongly suspect that this boy had a presentiment how the evening was to terminate with me, and entertained the selfish though childish wish of securing to himself an angling-rod which he had often admired, as a part of my spoils. I may do the boy wrong, but I had before remarked in him the peculiar art of pursuing the trifling objects of cupidity proper to his age, with the systematic address of much-riper years.

When we had commenced our walk, I upbraided him with the coolness of the evening, considering the season, the easterly wind, and other circumstances, unfavourable for angling. He persisted in his own story, and made a few casts, as if to convince me of my error, but caught no fish; and, indeed, as I am now convinced, was much more intent on watching my motions, than on taking any. When I ridiculed him once more on his fruitless endeavours, he answered with a sneering smile, that "the trout would not rise, because there was thunder in the air;" an intimation which, in one sense, I have found too true.

I arrived at Mount Sharon; was received by my friends there with their wonted kindness; and after being a little rallied on my having suddenly left them on the preceding evening, I agreed to make atonement by staying all night, and dismissed the lad who attended with my fishing-rod, to carry that information to Shepherd's Bush. It may be doubted whether he went thither, or in a different direction.

Between eight and nine o'clock, when it began to become dark, we walked on the terrace to enjoy the appearance of the firmament, glittering with ten million of stars; to which a slight touch of early frost gave sunfold lustre. As we gazed on this splendid scene, Miss Geddes, I think, was the first to point out to our admiration a shooting or falling star, which, she said, drew a long train after it. Looking to the part of the heavens which she pointed out, I distinctly observed two successive sky-rockets arise and burst in the sky.

"These meteors," said Mr Geddes, in answer to his sister's observation, "are not formed in heaven, nor do they bode any good to the dwellers upon earth."

As he spoke, I looked to another quarter of the sky, and a rocket, as if a signal in answer to those which had already appeared, rose high from the earth, and burst apparently among the stars.

Mr Geddes seemed very thoughtful for some minutes, and then said to his sister, "Rachel, though it waxes late, I must go down to the fishing station, and pass the night in the overseer's room there."

"Nay, then," replied the lady, "I am but too well assured that the sons of Belial are menacing

these nets and devices. Joshua, art thou a man of peace, and wilt thou willingly and wittingly thrust thyself, where thou mayst be tempted by the old man Adam within thee, to enter into debate and strife?"

"I am a man of peace, Rachel," answered Mr Geddes, "even to the utmost extent which our friends can demand of humanity; and neither have I ever used, nor, with the help of God, will I at any future time employ, the arm of flesh to repel or to revenge injuries. But if I can, by mild reasons and firm conduct, save these rude men from committing a crime, and the property belonging to myself and others from sustaining damage, surely I do but the duty of a man and a Christian."

With these words, he ordered his horse instantly; and his sister ceasing to argue with him, folded her arms upon her bosom, and looked up to heaven with a resigned and yet sorrowful countenance.

These particulars may appear trivial; but it is better, in my present condition, to exert my faculties in recollecting the past, and in recording it, than waste them in vain and anxious anticipations of the future.

It would have been scarcely proper in me to remain in the house, from which the master was thus suddenly summoned away; and I therefore begged permission to attend him to the fishing station, assuring his sister that I would be a guarantee for his safety.

The proposal seemed to give much pleasure to Miss Geddes. "Let it be so, brother," she said; "and let the young man share the desire of his heart, that there may be a faithful witness to stand by thee in the hour of need, and to report how it shall fare with thee."

"Nay, Rachel," said the worthy man, "thou art to blame in this, that to quiet thy apprehensions on my account, thou shouldst thrust into danger—if danger it shall prove to be—this youth, our guest; for whom, doubtless, in case of mishap, as many hearts will ache as may be afflicted on our account."

"No, my good friend," said I, taking Mr Geddes's hand, "I am not so happy as you suppose me. Were my span to be concluded this evening, few would so much as know that such a being had existed for twenty years on the face of the earth; and of these few, only one would sincerely regret me. Do not, therefore, refuse me the privilege of attending you; and of shewing, by so trifling an act of kindness, that if I have few friends, I am at least desirous to serve them."

"Thou hast a kind heart, I warrant thee," said Joshua Geddes, returning the pressure of my hand. "Rachel, the young man shall go with me. Why should he not face danger, in order to do justice and preserve peace? There is that within me," he added, looking upwards, and with a passing enthusiasm which I had not before observed, and which perhaps rather belonged to the sect than to his own personal character—"I say, I have that within which assures me, that though the ungodly may rage even like the storm of the ocean, they shall not have freedom to prevail against us."

Having spoken thus, Mr Geddes appointed a pony to be saddled for my use; and having taken a basket with some provisions, and a servant to carry back the horses, for which there was no accommodation at the fishing station, we set off about

nine o'clock at night, and after three quarters of an hour's riding, arrived at our place of destination.

The station consists, or then consisted, of huts for four or five fishermen, a cooperage and shed, and a better sort of cottage, at which the superintendent resided. We gave our horses to the servant, to be carried back to Mount Sharon; my companion expressing himself humanely anxious for their safety—and knocked at the door of the house. At first we only heard a barking of dogs; but these animals became quiet on snuffing beneath the door, and acknowledging the presence of friends. A hvarmo voice then demanded, in rather unfriendly accents, who we were, and what we wanted; and it was not until Joshua named himself, and called upon his superintendent to open, that the latter appeared at the door of the hut, attended by three large dogs of the Newfoundland breed. He had a flambeau in his hand, and two large heavy ship-pistols stuck into his belt. He was a stout, elderly man, who had been a sailor, as I learned, during the earlier part of his life, and was now much confided in by the Fishing Company, whose concerns he directed under the orders of Mr Geddes.

"Thou didst not expect me to-night, friend Davies?" said my friend to the old man, who was arranging seats for us by the fire.

"No, Master Geddes," answered he, "I did not expect you, nor, to speak the truth, did I wish for you either."

"These are plain terms, John Davies," answered Mr Geddes.

"Ay, ay, sir, I know your worship loves no holiday speeches."

"Thou dost guess, I suppose, what brings us here so late, John Davies?" said Mr Geddes.

"I do suppose, sir," answered the superintendent, "that it was because those d—d smuggling wreckers on the coast are shewing their lights to gather their forces, as they did the night before they broke down the dam-dike and wears up the country; but if that same be the case, I wish once more you had staid away, for your worship carries no fighting tackle aboard, I think; and there will be work for such ere morning, your worship."

"Worship is due to Heaven only, John Davies," said Geddes. "I have often desired thee to desist from using that phrase to me."

"I won't, then," said John; "no offence meant. But how the devil can a man stand picking his words, when he is just going to come to blows?"

"I do hope not, John Davies," said Joshua Geddes. "Call in the rest of the men, that I may give them their instructions."

"I may cry till doomsday, Master Geddes, ere a soul answers—the cowardly lubbers have all made sail—the cooper, and all the rest of them, so soon as they heard the enemy were ⁱⁿ the sea. They have all taken to the long-boat, and left the ship among the breakers, except little Phil and myself—they have, by—!"

"Swear not at all, John Davies—thou art an honest man; and I believe, without an oath, that thy comrades love their own bones better than my goods and chattels. And so thou hast no assistance but little Phil against a hundred men or two?"

"Why, there are the dogs, your honour knows, Neptune and Thetis—and the puppy may do something; and then though your worship—I beg

pardon—though your honour be no great fighter, this young gentleman may bear a hand."

"Ay, and I see you are provided with arms," said Mr Geddes; "let me see them."

"Ay, ay, sir; here be a pair of buxers will bite as well as bark—these will make sure of two rogues at least. It would be a shame to strike without firing a shot.—Take care, your honour, they are double-shotted."

"Ay, John Davies, I will take care of them," throwing the pistols into a tub of water beside him; "and I wish I could render the whole generation of them useless at the same moment."

A deep shade of displeasure passed over John Davies's weather-beaten countenance. "Belike your honour is going to take the command yourself, then?" he said, after a pause. "Why, I can be of little use now; and since your worship, or your honour, or whatever you are, means to strike quietly, I believe you will do it better without me than with me, for I am like enough to make mischief, I admit; but I'll never leave my post without orders."

"Then you have mine, John Davies, to go to Mount Sharon directly, and take the boy Phil with you. Where is he?"

"He is on the outlook for these scums of the earth," answered Davies; "but it is to no purpose to know when they come, if we are not to stand to our weapons."

"We will use none but those of sense and reason, John."

"And you may just as well cast chaff against the wind, as speak sense and reason to the like of them."

"Well, well, be it so," said Joshua; "and now, John Davies, I know thou art what the world calls a brave fellow, and I have ever found thee an honest one. Aforenow I command you to go to Mount Sharon, and let Phil lie on the bank-side—see the poor boy hath a sea-cloak, though—and watch what happens here, and let him bring you the news; and if any violence shall be offered to the property there, I trust to your fidelity to carry my sister to Dumfries, to the house of our friends the Cressacks, and inform the civil authorities of what mischief hath befallen."

The old seaman paused a moment. "It is hard lines for me," he said, "to leave your honour in tribulation; and yet, staying here, I am only like to make bad worse; and your honour's sister, Miss Rachel, must be looked to, that's certain; for if this rogues once get their hand to mischief, they will come to Mount Sharon after they have wasted and destroyed this here snug little road-stead, where I thought to ride at anchor for life."

"Right, right, John Davies," said Joshua Geddes; "and best call the dogs with you."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the veteran, "for they are something of my mind, and would not keep quiet if they saw mischief doing; so maybe they might come to mischief, poor dumb creatures. So God bless your honour—I mean your worship—I cannot bring my mouth to say fare you well.—Here, Neptune, Thotis! come, dogs, come."

So saying, and with a very crest-fallen countenance, John Davies left the hut.

"Now there goes one of the best and most faithful creatures that ever was born," said Mr Geddes, as the superintendent shut the door of the cottage.

"Nature made him with a heart that would not have suffered him to harm a fly; but thou steepest, friend Latimer, that as men arm their bull-dogs with spiked collars, and their game-cocks with steel spurs, to aid them in fight, so they corrupt, by education, the best and mildest natures, until fortitude and spirit become stubbornness and ferocity. Believe me, friend Latimer, I would as soon expose my faithful household dog to a vain combat with a herd of wolves, as you trusty creature to the violence of the enraged multitude. But I need say little on this subject to thee, friend Latimer, who, I doubt not, art trained to believe that courage is displayed and honour attained, not by doing and suffering, as becomes a man, that which fate calls us to suffer, and justice commands us to do, but because thou art ready to retort violence for violence, and considerest the lightest insult as a sufficient cause for the spilling of blood, nay, the taking of life.—But, leaving these points of controversy to a more fit season, let us see what our basket of provision contains; for in truth, friend Latimer, I am one of those whom neither fear nor anxiety deprive of their ordinary appetite."

We found the means of good cheer accordingly, which Mr Geddes seemed to enjoy as much as if it had been eaten in a situation of perfect safety; nay, his conversation appeared to be rather more gay than on ordinary occasions. After eating our supper, we left the hut together, and walked for a few minutes on the banks of the sea. It was high water, and the ebb had not yet commenced. The moon shone broad and bright upon the placid face of the Solway Firth, and shewed a slight ripple upon the stakes, the tops of which were just visible above the waves, and on the dark-coloured buoys which marked the upper edge of the enclosure of nets. At a much greater distance,—for the estuary is here very wide,—the line of the English coast was seen on the verge of the water, resembling one of those fog-banks on which mariners are said to gaze, uncertain whether it be land or atmospherical delusion.

"We shall be undisturbed for some hours," said Mr Geddes; "they will not come down upon us till the state of the tide permits them to destroy the tide nets. 'Tis it not strange to think that human passions will so soon transform such a tranquil scene as this, into one of devastation and confusion?"

It was indeed a scene of exquisite stillness; so much so, that the restless waves of the Solway seemed, if not absolutely to sleep, at least to slumber;—on the shore no night-bird was heard—the cock had not sung his first matins, and we ourselves walked more lightly than by day, as if to suit the sounds of our own paces to the serene tranquillity around us. At length, the plaintive cry of a dog broke the silence, and on our return to the cottage, we found that the younger of the three animals which had gone along with John Davies, unaccustomed, perhaps, to distant journeys, and the duty of following to heel, had strayed from the party, and unable to rejoin them, had wandered back to the place of its birth.

"Another feeble addition to our feeble garrison," said Mr Geddes, as he caressed the dog, and admitted it into the cottage. "Poor thing! as thou art incapable of doing any mischief, I hope thou wilt sustain none. At least thou mayst do us the good

service of a sentinel, and permit us to enjoy a quiet repose, under the certainty that thou wilt alarm us when the enemy is at hand."

There were two beds in the superintendent's room, upon which we threw ourselves. Mr Geddes, with his happy equanimity of temper, was asleep in the first five minutes. I lay for some time in doubtful and anxious thoughts, watching the fire and the motions of the restless dog, which, disturbed probably at the absence of John Davies, wandered from the hearth to the door and back again, then came to the bedside and licked my hands and face, and at length, experiencing no repulse to its advances, established itself at my feet, and went to sleep, an example which I soon afterwards followed.

The rage of narration, my dear Alan—for I will never relinquish the hope that what I am writing may one day reach your hands—has not forsaken me, even in my confinement, and the extensive though unimportant details into which I have been hurried, renders it necessary that I commence another sheet. Fortunately, my pigmy characters comprehend a great many words within a small space of paper.

CHAPTER IV.

DARSE LATIMER'S JOURNAL, IN CONTINUATION.

THE morning was dawning, and Mr Geddes and I myself were still sleeping soundly, when the alarm was given by my canine bedfellow, who first growled deeply at intervals, and at length bore more decided testimony to the approach of some enemy. I opened the door of the cottage, and perceived, at the distance of about two hundred yards, a small but close column of men, which I would have taken for a dark hedge, but that I could perceive it was advancing rapidly and in silence.

The dog flew towards them, but instantly ran howling back to me, having probably been chastised by a stick or a stone. Uncertain as to the plan of tactics or of treaty which Mr Geddes might think proper to adopt, I was about to retire into the cottage, when he suddenly joined me at the door, and slipping his arm through mine, said, "Let us go to meet them manfully; we have done nothing to be ashamed of.—Friends," he said, raising his voice as we approached them, "who and what are you, and with what purpose are you here on my property?"

A loud cheer was the answer returned, and a brace of fiddlers who occupied the front of the march immediately struck up the insulting air, the words of which begin,

"Merrily danced the Quaker's wife,
And merrily danced the Quaker."

Even at that moment of alarm, I think I recognized the tones of the blind fiddler, Will, known by the name of Wandering Willie, from his itinerant habits. They continued to advance swiftly and in great order, in their front

"The fiery fiddlers playing martial airs:"

when, coming close up, they surrounded us by a

single movement, and there was a universal cry, "Whoop, Quaker—whoop, Quaker! Here have we them both, the wet Quaker and the dry one."

"Halt up the wet Quaker to dry, and wet the dry one with a ducking," answered another voice.

"Where is the sea-otter, John Davies, that destroyed more fish than any sealch upon Ailsay Craig!" exclaimed a third voice. "I have an old crow to pluck with him, and a peck to put the feathers in."

We stood perfectly passive; for, to have attempted resistance against more than a hundred men, armed with guns, fish-spears, iron-crows, spades, and bludgeons, would have been an act of utter insanity. Mr Geddes, with his strong sonorous voice, answered the question about the superintendent in a haughty, the manly indifference of which compelled them to attend to him.

"John Davies," he said, "will, I trust, soon be at Dumfries—"

"To fetch down redcoats and dragoons against us, you casting old villain!"

A blow was, at the same time, levelled at my friend, which I parried by interposing the stick I had in my hand. I was instantly struck down, and have a faint recollection of hearing some crying, "Kill the young spy!" and others, as I thought, interposing on my behalf. But a second blow on the head, received in the scuffle, soon deprived me of sense and consciousness, and threw me into a state of insensibility, from which I did not recover immediately. When I did come to myself, I was lying on the bed from which I had just risen before the fray, and my poor companion, the Newfoundland puppy, its courage entirely cowed by the tumult of the riot, had crept as close to me as it could, and lay trembling and whining, as if under the most dreadful terror. I doubted at first whether I had not dreamed of the tumult, until, as I attempted to rise, a feeling of pain and dizziness assured me that the injury I had sustained was but too real. I gathered together my senses—listened—and heard at a distance the shouts of the rioters, busy, doubtless, in their work of devastation. I made a second effort to rise, or at least to turn myself, for I lay with my face to the wall of the cottage, but I found that my limbs were secured, and my motions effectually prevented—not indeed by cords, but by linen or cloth bandages swathed around my ankles, and securing my arms to my sides. Aware of my utterly captive condition, I groaned betwixt bodily pain and mental distress.

A voice by my bedside whispered, in a whining tone, "Whisht a-ye, hinnie—whisht a-ye; hand your tongue, like a gude bairn—ye have cost us dear enough already. My hinnie's clean gane now."

Knowing, as I thought, the phraseology of the life of the itinerant musician, I asked her where her husband was, and whether he had been hurt.

"Broken," answered the dame, "all broken to pieces; fit for naught but to be made spunks of—the best blood that was in Scotland."

"Broken?—blood?—is your husband wounded; has there been bloodshed—broken limbs?"

"Broken limbs—I wish," answered the beldam, "that my hinnie had broken the best bête in his body, before he had broken his fiddle, that was the best blood in Scotland—it was a cremony, for aught that I ken."

"Pshaw — only his fiddle!" said I.

"I dinna ken what waur your honour could have wished him to do, unless he had broken his neck; and this is muckle the same to my hinnie Willie, and me. Chaw, indeed! It is easy to say *chaw*, but wha is to gie us any thing to *chaw*? — the brad-winner's game, and we may e'en sit down and starve."

"No, no," I said, "I will pay you for twenty such fiddles."

"Twenty such! is that a' ye ken about it! the country hadna the like o't. But if your honour were to pay us, as nae doubt wad be to your credit here and hereafter, where are ye to get the siller?"

"I have enough of money," said I, attempting to reach my hand towards my side-pocket; "undoose these bandages, and I will pay you on the spot."

This hint appeared to move her, and she was approaching the bedside, as I hoped, to liberate me from my bonds, when a nearer and more desperate shout was heard, as if the rioters were close by the hut.

"I daurna — I daurna," said the poor woman, "they would murder me and my hinnie Willie baith, and they have misguided us enough already; — but if there is any thing worldly I could do for your honour, leave out loosing ye!"

What she said recalled me to my bodily suffering. Agitation, and the effects of the usage I had received, had produced a burning thirst. I asked for a drink of water.

"Heaven Almighty forbid that Epps Ainslie should gie ony sick gentleman cauld well-water, and him in a fever. Na, na, hinnie, let me alone, I'll do better for ye than the like of that!"

"Give me what you will," I replied; "let it be but he liquid and cool."

The woman gave me a large horn accordingly, filled with spirits and water, which, without minute inquiry concerning the nature of its contents, I drained at a draught. Either the spirits taken in such a manner, acted more suddenly than usual on my brain, or else there was some drug mixed with the beverage. I remember little after drinking it off, only that the appearance of things around me became indistinct; that the woman's form seemed to multiply itself, and to flit in various figures around me, bearing the same lineaments as she herself did. I remember also that the discordant noises and cries of those without the cottage, seemed to die away in a hum like that with which a nurse hushes her babe. At length I fell into a deep sound sleep, or rather, a state of absolute insensibility.

I have reason to think this species of trance lasted for many hours; indeed, for the whole subsequent day and part of the night. It was not uniformly so profound, for my recollection of it is chequered with many dreams, all of a painful nature, but too faint and too indistinct to be remembered. At length the moment of waking came, and my sensations were horrible.

A deep sound, which, in the confusion of my senses, I identified with the cries of the rioters, was the first thing of which I was sensible; next, I became conscious that I was carried violently forward in some conveyance, with an unequal motion, which gave me much pain. My position was horizontal, and when I attempted to stretch my

hands in order to find some mode of securing myself against this species of suffering, I found I was bound as before, and the horrible reality rushed on my mind, that I was in the hands of those who had lately committed a great outrage on property, and were now about to kidnap, if not to murder me. I opened my eyes, it was to no purpose — all around me was dark, for a day had passed over during my captivity. A dispiriting sickness oppressed my head — my heart seemed on fire, while my feet and hands were chilled and benumbed with want of circulation. It was with the utmost difficulty that I at length, and gradually, recovered in a sufficient degree the power of observing external sounds and circumstances; and when I did so, they presented nothing consolatory.

Groping with my hands, as far as the bandages would permit, and receiving the assistance of some occasional glances of the moonlight, I became aware that the carriage in which I was transported was one of the light carts of the country, called *tumblers*, and that a little attention had been paid to my accommodation, as I was laid upon some sacks covered with matting, and filled with straw. Without these, my condition would have been still more intolerable, for the vehicle, sinking now on one side, and now on the other, sometimes sticking absolutely fast, and requiring the utmost exertions of the animal which drew it to put it once more in motion, was subjected to jolts in all directions, which were very severe. At other times it rolled silently and smoothly over what seemed to be wet sand; and, as I heard the distant roar of the tide I had little doubt that we were engaged in passing the formidable estuary which divides the two kingdoms.

There seemed to be at least five or six people about the cart, some on foot, others on horseback; the former lent assistance whenever it was in danger of upsetting, or sticking fast in the quicksand; the others rode before and acted as guides, often changing the direction of the vehicle as the precarious state of the passage required.

I addressed myself to the men around the cart, and endeavoured to move their compassion. I had harmed, I said, no one, and for no action in my life had deserved such cruel treatment. I had no concern whatever in the fishing station which had incurred their displeasure, and my acquaintance with Mr Gaddes was of a very late date. Lastly, and as my strongest argument, I endeavoured to excite their fears, by informing them that my rank in life would not permit me to be either murdered or secreted with impunity; and to interest their avarice, by the promises I made them of reward, if they would effect my deliverance. I only received a scornful laugh in reply to my threats; my promises might have done more, for the fellows were whispering together as if in hesitation, and I began to reiterate and increase my offers, when the voice of one of the horsemen, who had suddenly come up, enjoined silence to the men on foot, and, approaching the side of the cart, said to me, with a strong and determined voice, "Young man, there is no personal harm designed to you. If you remain silent and quiet, you may reckon on good treatment; but if you endeavour to tamper with these men in the execution of their duty, I will take such measures for silencing you, as you shall remember the longest day you have to live."

I thought I knew the voice which uttered these threats; but, in such a situation, my perceptions could not be supposed to be perfectly accurate. I was contented to reply, "Whoever you are that speak to me, I entreat the benefit of the meanest prisoner, who is not to be subjected legally to greater hardship than is necessary for the restraint of his person. I entreat that these bonds, which hurt me so cruelly, may be slackened at least, if not removed altogether."

"I will slacken the belts," said the former speaker; "nay, I will altogether remove them, and allow you to pursue your journey in a more convenient manner, provided you will give me your word of honour that you will not attempt an escape."

"Never!" I answered, with an energy of which despair alone could have rendered me capable — "I will never submit to loss of freedom a moment longer than I am subjected to it by force."

"Enough," he replied; "the sentiment is natural; but do not on your side complain that I, who am carrying on an important undertaking, use the only means in my power for ensuring its success."

I increased to know what it was designed to do with me; but my conductor, in a voice of menacing authority, desired me to be silent on my peril; and my strength and spirits were too much exhausted to permit my continuing a dialogue so singular, even if I could have promised myself any good result by doing so.

It is proper here to add, that, from my recollections at the time, and from what has since taken place, I have the strongest possible belief that the man with whom I held this expostulation, was the singular person residing at Brokenburn, in Dumfriesshire, and called by the farmers of that hamlet, the Laird of the Solway Lochs. The cause for his inveterate persecution I cannot pretend even to guess at.

In the meantime, the cart was dragged heavily and wearily on, until the nearer roar of the advancing tide excited the apprehension of another danger. I could not mistake the sound, which I had heard upon another occasion, when it was only the speed of a fleet horse which saved me from perishing in the quicksands. Thou, my dear Alan, canst not but remember the former circumstances; and now, wonderful contrast! the very man, to the best of my belief, who then saved me from peril, was the leader of the lawless band who had deprived me of my liberty. I conjectured that the dangers grew imminent; for I heard some words and circumstances which made me aware that a rider hastily fastened his own horse to the shafts of the cart, in order to assist the exhausted animal which drew it, and the vehicle was now pulled forward at a faster pace, which the horses were urged to maintain by blows and curses. The men, however, were inhabitants of the neighbourhood; and I had strong personal reason to believe, that one of them, at least, was intimately acquainted with all the depths and shallows of the perilous paths in which we were engaged. But they were in imminent danger themselves; and if so, as from the whispering and exertions to push on with the cart, was much to be apprehended, there was little doubt that I should be left behind as a useless encumbrance, and that while I was in a condition which rendered

every chance of escape impracticable. There were awful apprehensions; but it pleased Providence to increase them to a point which my brain was scarcely able to endure.

As we approached very near to a black line, which, dimly visible as it was, I could make out to be the shore, we heard two or three sounds, which appeared to be the report of fire-arms. Immediately all was bustle among our party to get forward. Presently a fellow galloped up to us, crying out, "Ware hawk! ware hawk! the land-sharks are out from Burgh, and Allonby Tom will lose his cargo if you do not bear a hand."

Most of my company seemed to make hastily for the shore on receiving this intelligence. A driver was left with the cart; but at length, when, after repeated and hair-breadth escapes, it actually stuck fast in a slough or quicksand, the fellow, with an oath, cut the harness, and, as I presume, departed with the horses, whose feet I heard splashing over the wet sand, and through the shallows, as he galloped off.

The dropping sound of fire-arms was still continued, but lost almost entirely in the thunder of the advancing surge. By a desperate effort I raised myself in the cart, and attained a sitting posture, which served only to shew me the extent of my danger. There lay my native land — my own England — the land where I was born, and to which my wishes, since my earliest age, had turned with all the prejudices of national feeling — there it lay, within a furlong of the place where I yet was; that furlong, which an infant would have raced over in a minute, was yet a barrier effectual to divide me for ever from England and from life. I soon not only heard the roar of this dreadful torrent, but saw, by the fitful moonlight, the foamy crests of the devouring waves, as they advanced with the speed and fury of a pack of hungry wolves.

The consciousness that the slightest ray of hope, or power of struggling, was not left me, quite overcame the constancy which I had hitherto maintained. My eyes began to swim — my head grew giddy and mad with fear — I chattered and howled to the howling and roaring sea. One or two great waves already reached the cart, when the conductor of the party whom I have mentioned so often, was, as if by magic, at my side. He sprang from his horse into the vehicle, cut the ligatures which restrained me, and bade me get up and mount in the fend's name.

Seeing I was incapable of obeying, he seized me, as if I had been a child of six months old, threw me across the horse, sprung on behind, supporting with one hand, while he directed the animal with the other. In my helpless and painful posture, I was unconscious of the degree of danger which we incurred; but I believe at that time the horse was swimming, or nearly so; and that it was with difficulty that my stern and powerful assistant kept my head above water. I remember particularly the shock which I felt when the animal, endeavouring to gain the bank, reared, and very nearly fell back on his burden. The time during which I continued in this dreadful condition did not probably exceed two or three minutes, yet so strongly were they marked with horror and agony, that they seem to my recollection a much more considerable space of time.

When I had been thus snatched from destruc-

tion, I had only power to say to my protector, — or oppressor, — for he merited either name at my hand, "You do not, then, design to murder me!"

He laughed as he replied, but it was a sort of laughter which I scarce desire to hear again, — "Else you think I had let the waves do the work! But remember, the shepherd saves his sheep from the torrent — is it to preserve its life — Be silent, however, with questions or entreaties. What I mean to do, thou canst no more discover or prevent, than a man, with his bare palm, can scoop dry the Solway."

I was too much exhausted to continue the argument; and, still numbed and torpid in all my limbs, permitted myself without reluctance to be placed on a horse brought for the purpose. My formidable conductor rode on the one side, and a lother person on the other, keeping me upright in the saddle. In this manner we travelled forward at a considerable rate, and by by-roads, with which my attendant seemed as familiar as with the perilous passages of the Solway.

At length, after stumbling through a labyrinth of dark and deep lanes, and crossing more than one rough and barren heath, we found ourselves on the edge of a high-road, where a chaise and four awaited, as it appeared, our arrival. To my great relief, we now changed our mode of conveyance; for my dizziness and headach had returned in so strong a degree, that I should otherwise have been totally unable to keep my seat on horseback, even with the support which I received.

My doubted and dangerous companion signed to me to enter the carriage — the man who had ridden on the left side of my horse stepped in after me, and drawing up the blinds of the vehicle, gave this signal for instant departure.

I had obtained a glimpse of the countenance of my new companion, as by the aid of a dark lantern the drivers opened the carriage door, and I was well-nigh persuaded that I recognized in him the domestic of the leader of this party, whom I had seen at his house in Brokenburn on a former occasion. To ascertain the truth of my suspicion, I asked him whether his name was not Cristal Nixon.

"What is other folk's names to you," he replied, gruffly, "who cannot tell your own father and mother?"

"You know them, perhaps!" I exclaimed eagerly. "You know them! and with that secret is connected the treatment which I am now receiving! It must be so, for in my life have I never injured any one. Tell me the cause of my misfortunes, or rather, help me to my liberty, and I will reward you richly."

"Ay, ay," replied my keeper; "but what use to give you liberty, who know nothing how to use it like a gentleman, but spend your time with Quakers and fiddlers, and such like raff! If I was your — hem, hem, hem!"

Here Cristal stopped short, just on the point, as it appeared, when some information was likely to escape him. I urged him once more to be my friend, and promised him all the stock of money which I had about me, and it was not inconsiderable, if he would assist in my escape.

He listened, as if to a proposition which had some interest, and replied, but in a voice rather softer than before, "Ay, but men do not catch old birds

with chaff, my master. Where have you got the rhime you are so flush of?"

"I will give you earnest directly, and that in bank-notes," said I; but thrusting my hand into my side-pocket, I found my pocketbook was gone. I would have persuaded myself that it was only the numbness of my hands which prevented my finding it; but Cristal Nixon, who bears in his countenance that cynicism which is especially entertained with human misery, no longer suppressed his laughter.

"Oh, ho! my young master," he said; "we have taken good enough care you have not kept the means of bribing poor folk's fidelity. What, man, they have souls as well as other people, and to make them break trust is a deadly sin. And as for me, young gentleman, if you would fill Saint Mary's Kirk with gold, Cristal Nixon would mind it no more than so many chucky-stones."

I would have persisted, were it but in hopes of his letting drop that which it concerned me to know, but he cut off farther communication, by desiring me to lean back in the corner and go to sleep.

"Thou art cock-brained enough already," he added, "and we shall have thy young pate added entirely, if you do not take some natural rest."

I did indeed require repose, if not slumber; the draught which I had taken continued to operate, and satisfied in my own mind that no attempt on my life was designed, the fear of instant death no longer combated the torpor which crept over me — I slept, and slept soundly, but still without refreshment.

When I awoke, I found myself extremely indisposed; images of the past, and anticipations of the future, floated confusedly through my brain. I perceived, however, that my situation was changed, greatly for the better. I was in a good bed, with the curtains drawn round it; I heard the lowered voice, and cautious step of attendants, who seemed to respect my repose; it appeared as if I was in the hands either of friends, or of such as meant me no personal harm.

I can give but an indistinct account of two or three broken and feverish days which succeeded, but if they were chequered with dreams and visions of terror, other and more agreeable objects were also sometimes presented. Alan Fairford will understand me when I say, I am convinced I saw G. M. during this interval of oblivion. I had medical attendance, and was bled more than once. I also remember a painful operation performed on my head, where I had received a severe blow on the night of the riot. My hair was cut short, and the bone of the skull examined, to discover if the cranium had received any injury.

On seeing the physician, it would have been natural to have appealed to him on the subject of my confinement, and I remember more than once attempting to do so. But the fever lay like a spell upon my tongue, and when I would have implored the doctor's assistance, I rambled from the subject, and spoke I know not what nonsense. Some power, which I was unable to resist, seemed to impel me into a different course of conversation from what I intended, and though conscious, in some degree, of the failure, I could not mend it; and resolved, therefore, to be patient, until my capacity of steady thought and expression was restored to me with my ordinary health, which had sustained a severe

stock from the vicissitudes to which I had been exposed.

CHAPTER V.

DARSI LATIMER'S JOURNAL, IN CONTINUATION.

Two or three days, perhaps more, perhaps less, had been spent, in bed, where I was carefully attended, and treated, I believe, with as much judgment as the case required, and I was at length allowed to quit my bed, though not the chamber. I was now more able to make some observation on the place of my confinement.

The room, in appearance and furniture, resembled the best apartment in a farmer's house; and the window, two stories high, looked into a back-yard, or court, filled with domestic poultry. There were the usual domestic officers about this yard. I could distinguish the brewhouse and the barn, and I heard, from a more remote building, the lowing of the cattle, and other rural sounds, announcing a large and well-stocked farm. These were sights and sounds qualified to dispel any apprehension of immediate violence. Yet the building seemed ancient and strong, a part of the roof was battlemented, and the walls were of great thickness; lastly, I observed, with some unpleasant sensations, that the windows of my chamber had been lately secured with iron stanchions, and that the servants who brought me victuals, or visited my apartment to render other menial offices, always locked the door when they retired.

The comfort and cleanliness of my chamber were of true English growth, and such as I had rarely seen on the other side of the Tweed; the very-old wainscot, which composed the floor and the paneling of the room, was scrubbed with a degree of labour which the Scottish housewife rarely bestows on her most costly furniture.

The whole apartments appropriated to my use consisted of the bedroom, a small parlour adjacent, within which was a still smaller closet, having a narrow window, which seemed adficiently to have been used as a shot-hole, admitting, indeed, a very moderate portion of light and air, but without its being possible to see any thing from it except the blue sky, and that only by mounting on a chair. There were appearances of a separate entrance into this cabinet, besides that which communicated with the parlour, but it had been recently built up, as I discovered, by removing a piece of tapestry which covered the fresh mason-work. I found some of my clothes here, with linen and other articles, as well as my writing-case, containing pen, ink, and paper, which enables me, at my leisure, (which, God knows, is undisturbed enough,) to make this record of my confinement. It may be well believed, however, that I do not trust to the security of the bureau, but carry the written sheets about my person, so that I can only be deprived of them by actual violence. I also am cautious to write in the little cabinet only, so that I can hear any person approach me through the other apartments, and

have time enough to put aside my journal before they come upon me.

The servants, a stout country-fellow, and a very pretty milkmaid looking lass, by whom I am attended, seem of the true Joan and Hodge school, thinking of little, and desiring nothing, beyond the very limited sphere of their own duties or enjoyments, and having no curiosity whatever about the affairs of others. Their behaviour to me in particular, is, at the same time, very kind and very provoking. My table is abundantly supplied, and they seem anxious to comply with my taste in that department. But whenever I make inquiries beyond "what's for dinner," the brute of a lad, baffles me by his *asas*, and his *dunna know*, and if hard pressed, turns his back on me composedly, and leaves the room. The girl, too, pretends to be as simple as he; but an arch grin, which she cannot always suppress, seems to acknowledge that she understands perfectly well the game which she is playing, and is determined to keep me in ignorance. Both of them, and the wench in particular, treat me as they would do a spoiled child, and never directly refuse me any thing which I ask, taking care, at the same time, not to make their words good by effectually granting my request. Thus, if I desire to go out, I am promised by Dorcas that I shall walk in the park at night, and see the cows milked, just as she would propose such an amusement to a child. But she takes care never to keep her word, if it is in her power to do so.

In the meantime, there has stolen on me insensibly an indifference to my freedom—a careless press about my situation, for which I am unable to account, unless it be the consequence of weakness and loss of blood. I have read of men who, injured as I am, have surprised the world by the address with which they have successfully overcome the most formidable obstacles to their escape; and when I have heard such anecdotes, I have said to myself, that no one who is possessed only of a fragment of freestone, or a rusty nail, to grind down rivets and to pick locks, having his full leisure to employ in the task, need continue the inhabitant of a prison. Here, however, I sit, day after day, without a single effort to effect my liberation.

Yet my inactivity is not the result of despondency, but arises, in part at least, from feelings of a very different cast. My story, long a mysterious one, seems now upon the verge of some strange development; and I feel a solemn impression that I ought to wait the course of events, to struggle against which is opposing my feeble efforts to the high will of fate. Thou, my Alan, wilt treat as timidity this passive acquiescence, which has sunk down on me like a benumbing torpor; but if thou hast remembered by what vicious my couch was haunted, and dost but think of the probability that I am in the vicinity, perhaps under the same roof with G. M., thou wilt acknowledge that other feelings than pusillanimity have tended in some degree to reconcile me to my fate.

Still I own it is unmanly to submit with patience to this oppressive confinement. My heart rises against it, especially when I sit down to record my sufferings in this Journal; and I am determined, as the first step to my deliverance, to have my letters sent to the post-house.

1 See Note P. Ridiculous attack upon the *Dum-diller* of Sir James Graham of Ketherly.

I am disappointed. When the girl Dorcas, upon whom I had fixed for a messenger, heard me talk of sending a letter, she willingly offered her services, and received the crown which I gave her, (for my purse had not taken flight with the more valuable contents of my pocketbook,) with a smile which shewed her whole set of white teeth.

But when, with the purpose of gaining some intelligence respecting my present place of abode, I asked to which post-town she was to send or carry the letter, a stolid "Anas" shewed me she was either ignorant of the nature of a post-office, or that, for the present, she chose to seem so. — "Simpleton!" I said, with some sharpness.

"O Lord, sir!" answered the girl, turning pale, which they always do when I shew any sparks of anger, — "Don't put yourself in a passion — I'll put the letter in the post."

"What! and not know the name of the post-town?" said I, out of patience. "How on earth do you propose to manage that?"

"La you there, good master. What need you frighten a poor girl that is no schollard, bating what she learned at the Charity-School of Saint Bees?"

"Is Saint Bees far from this place, Dorcas?" — "Do you send your letters there?" said I, in a manner as insinuating, and yet careless, as I could assume.

"Saint Bees! — La, who but a madman — begging your honour's pardon — it's a matter of twenty years since fader lived at Saint Bees, which is twenty, or forty, or I dunna know not how many miles from this part, to the West, on the coast-side; and I would not have left Saint Bees, but that fader —"

"Oh, the devil take your father!" replied I.

To which she answered, "Nay, but thof your honour be a little how-come-so, you shouldn't damn folk's faders; and I won't stand to it, for one."

"Oh, I beg you a thousand pardons — I wish your father as ill in the world — he was a very honest man in his way."

"Was an honest man?" she exclaimed; for the Cumbrians are, it would seem, like their neighbours the Scotch, ticklish on the point of ancestry. — "He is a very honest man as ever led gog with halter on head to Staneshaw-Bank Fair — Honest! — He is a horse-couper."

"Right, right," I replied; "I know it — I have heard of your father — as honest as any horse-couper of them all. Why, Dorcas, I mean to buy a horse of him."

"Ah, your honour," sighed Dorcas, "he is the man to serve your honour well — If ever you should get round again — or thof you were a bit off the hooks, he would no more cheat you than —"

"Well, well, we will deal, my girl, you may depend on't. But tell me now, were I to give you a letter, what would you do to get it forward?"

"Why, put it into Squire's own bag that hangs in hall," answered poor Dorcas. "What else could I do? He sends it to Brampton, or to Carlisle, or where it pleases him, once a-week, and that gale."

"Ah!" said I; "and I suppose your sweetheart John carries it?"

"Nay — disn't now — and Jan is no sweetheart of mine, ever since he danced at his mother's feast with Kitty Rutledge, and let me sit still; that a did."

"It was most abominable in Jan, and what I could never have thought of him," I replied.

"Oh, but a did though — a let me sit still on my scat, a did."

"Well, well, my pretty May, you will get a handsomer fellow than Jan — Jan's not the fellow for you, I see that."

"Noa, noa," answered the damsel; "but he is weel enough for a'that, mon. But I carena a button for him; for there is the miller's son, that suitored me last Appleby Fair, when I went wi' oncle, is a gway canny lad as you will see in the sunshin."

"Ay, a fine stout fellow — Do you think he would carry my letter to Carlisle?"

"To Carlisle! 'Twould be all his life is worth; he maun wait on elap and hopper, as they say. Old, his father would brain him if he went to Carlisle, bating to wrestling for the belt, or sic loike. But I ha' more bachelors than him; there is the schoolmaster, can write almaist as weel as thou canst, mon."

"Then he is the very man to take charge of a letter; he knows the trouble of writing one."

"Ay, marry does he, an thou comest to that, mon, only it takes him four hours to write as many lines. Tan, it's a great round haid loike, that one can read easily, and not loike your honour's, that are like midge's tae. But for ganging to Carlisle, he's dead foundered, man, as cripple as Eekie's mear."

"In the name of God," said I, "how is it that you propose to get my letter to the post?"

"Why, just to put it into Squire's bag loike," reiterated Dorcas; "he sends it by Cristal Nixon to post, as you call it, when such is his pleasure."

Here I was, then, not much edified by having obtained a list of Dorcas's bachelors; and by finding myself, with respect to any information which I desired, just exactly at the point where I set out. It was of consequence to me, however, to accustom the girl to converse with me familiarly. If she did so, she could not always be on her guard, and something, I thought, might drop from her which I could turn to advantage.

"Does not the Squire usually look into his letter-bag, Dorcas?" said I, with as much indifference as I could assume.

"That a doek," said Dorcas; "and a threw out a letter of mine to Raff Miller, because a said —"

"Well, well, I won't trouble him with mine," said I, "Dorcas; but, instead, I will write to him self, Dorcas. But how shall I address him?"

"Anas!" was again Dorcas's resource.

"I mean how is he called? — What is his name?" "Sure your honour should know best," said Dorcas.

"I know! — The devil! — You drive me beyond patience."

"Noa, noa! donna your honour go beyond patience — donna ye now," implored the wench. "And for his name, they say he has mair nor any in Westmoreland and on the Scottish Side. But he is but seldom wi' us, excepting in the cocking season; and then we just call him Squire loike; and so do my measter and dame."

"And is he here at present?" said I.

"Not he, not he; he is a buck-launting, as they tell me, somehwae up the Patterdale wye; but he comes and gangs like a flap of a whirlwind, or sic loike."

I broke off the conversation, after forcing on Dorcas a little silver to buy ribbons, with which she was so much delighted, that she exclaimed, "God! Cristal Nixon may say his worst on thee; but thou art a civil gentleman for all him; and a quiet man wi' woman folk loike."

There is no sense in being too quiet with women folk, so I added a kiss with my crown piece; and I cannot help thinking that I have secured a partisan in Dorcas. At least, she blushed, and pocketed her little compliment with one hand, while, with the other, she adjusted her cherry-coloured ribbons, a little disordered by the struggle it cost me to attain the honour of a salute.

As she unlocked the door to leave the apartment, she turned back, and looking on me with a strong expression of compassion, added the remarkable words, "La—be'st mad or no, thou'ee a mettled lad, after all."

There was something very ominous in the sound of these farewell words, which seemed to afford me a clew to the pretext under which I was detained in confinement. My demeanour was probably insane enough, while I was agitated at once by the frenzy incident to the fever, and the anxiety arising from my extraordinary situation. But is it possible, they can now establish any cause for confining me arising out of the state of my mind?

If this be really the pretext under which I am restrained from my liberty, nothing but the sedate correctness of my conduct can remove the prejudices which these circumstances may have excited in the minds of all who have approached me during my illness. I have heard—dreadful thought!—of men who, for various reasons, have been trepanned into the custody of the keepers of private madhouses, and whose brain, after years of misery, became at length unsettled, through irresistible sympathy with the wretched beings among whom they were clasped. This shall not be my case, if, by strong internal resolution, it is in human nature to avoid the action of exterior and contagious sympathies.

Meantime I sat down to compose and arrange my thoughts, for my purposed appeal to my jailer—so I must call him—whom I addressed in the following manner; having at length, and after making several copies, found language to qualify the sense of resentment which burned in the first draughts of my letter, and endeavoured to assume a tone more conciliating. I mentioned the two occasions on which he had certainly saved my life, when at the utmost peril; and I added, that whatever was the purpose of the restraint now practised on me, as I was given to understand, by his authority, it could not certainly be with any view to ultimately injuring me. He might, I said, have mistaken me for some other person; and I gave him what account I could of my situation and education, to correct such an error. I supposed it next possible, that he might think me too weak for travelling, and not capable of taking care of myself; and I begged to assure him, that I was restored to perfect health, and quite able to endure the fatigue of a journey. Lastly, I reminded him, in firm though measured terms, that the restraint which I sustained was an illegal one, and highly punishable by the laws which protect the liberties of the subject. I ended, by demanding, that he would take me before a magistrate; or, at least, that he would

favour me with a personal interview, and explain his meaning with regard to me.

Perhaps this letter was expressed in a tone too humble for the situation of an injured man, and I am inclined to think so when I again recapitulate its tenor. But what could I do? I was in the power of one whose passions seem as violent as his means of gratifying them appeared unbounded. I had reason, too, to believe [this to thee, Alan] that all his family did not approve of the violence of his conduct towards me; my object, in fine, was freedom, and who would not sacrifice much to attain it?

I had no means of addressing my letter excepting, "For the Squire's own hand." He could be at no great distance, for in the course of twenty-four hours I received an answer. It was addressed to Dekie Latimer, and contained these words:—"You have demanded an interview with me. You have required to be carried before a magistrate. Your first wish shall be granted—perhaps the second also. Meanwhile, be assured that you are a prisoner for the time, by competent authority, and that such authority is supported by adequate power. Beware, therefore, of struggling with a force sufficient to crush you, but abandon yourself to that train of events by which we are both swept along, and which it is impossible that either of us can resist."

These mysterious words were without signature of any kind, and left me nothing more important to do than to prepare myself for the meeting which they promised. For that purpose I must now break off, and make sure of the manuscript,—so far as I can, in my present condition, be sure of any thing,—by concealing it within the lining of my coat, as as not to be found without strict search.

CHAPTER VI.

LATIMER'S JOURNAL, IN CONTINUATION.

THE important interview expected at the conclusion of my last took place sooner than I had calculated; for the very day I received the letter, and just when my dinner was finished, the Squire, or whatever he is called, entered the room so suddenly, that I almost thought I beheld an apparition. The figure of this man is peculiarly noble and stately, and his voice has that deep fulness of accent which implies unresisted authority. I had risen involuntarily as he entered; we gazed on each other for a moment in silence, which was at length broken by my visitor.

"You have desired to see me," he said. "I am here; if you have sought to say, let me hear it; my time is too brief to be consumed in childish dummies."

"I would ask of you," said I, "by what authority I am detained in this place of confinement, and for what purpose?"

"I have told you already," said he, "that my authority is sufficient, and my power equal to it, this is all which it is necessary for you at present to know."

"Every British subject has a right to know why he suffers restraint," I replied; "nor can he be deprived of liberty without a legal warrant.—Show me that by which you confine me thus."

"You shall see more," he said; "you shall see the magistrate by whom it is granted, and that without a moment's delay."

This sudden proposal flattered and alarmed me; I felt nevertheless, that I had the right cause, and resolved to plead it boldly, although I could well have desired a little farther time for preparation. He turned, however, threw open the door of the apartment, and commanded me to follow him. I felt some inclination, when I crossed the threshold of my prison-chamber, to have turned and run for it; but I knew not where to find the stairs—had reason to think the outer-doors would be secured—and, to conclude, so soon as I had quitted the room to follow the proud step of my conductor, I observed that I was dogged by Cristal Nixon, who suddenly appeared within two paces of me, and with whose great personal strength, independent of the assistance he might have received from his master, I saw no chance of contending. I therefore followed, unresistingly, and in silence, along one or two passages of much greater length than consisted with the ideas I had previously entertained of the size of the house. At length a door was flung open, and we entered a large, old-fashioned parlour, having coloured glass in the windows, broken panelling on the wall, a huge grate, in which a large fagot or two smoked under an arched chimney-piece of stone, which bore some armorial device, whilst the walls were adorned with the usual number of heroes in armour, with large wigs instead of helmets, and ladies in sacques, smelling to nosegays.

Behind a long table, on which were several books, sat a smart underbred-looking man, wearing his own hair tied in a club, and who, from the quire of paper laid before him, and the pen which he handled at my entrance, seemed prepared to officiate as clerk. As I wish to describe these persons as accurately as possible, I may add, he wore a dark-coloured coat, corduroy breeches, and spatterdash. At the upper end of the same table, in an ample easy-chair, covered with black leather, reposed a fat personage, about fifty years old, who either was actually a country justice, or was well selected to represent such a character. His leathern breeches were faultless in make, his jockey boots spotless in the varnish, and a handsome and flourishing pair of boot-garters, as they are called, united the one part of his garments to the other; in fine, a richly-laced scarlet waistcoat, and a purple coat, set off the neat though corpulent figure of the little man, and threw an additional bloom upon his plebeian aspect. I suppose he had dined, for it was two hours past noon, and he was examining himself, and niding digestion, with a pipe of tobacco. There was an air of importance in his manner which corresponded to the rural dignity of his exterior, and a habit which he had of throwing out a number of interjectional sounds, uttered with a strange variety of intonation running from bass up to treble in a very extraordinary manner, or breaking off his sentences with a whiff of his pipe, seemed adopted to give an air of thought and mature deliberation to his opinions and decisions. Notwithstanding all this, Alan, it might be dotted, as our old Professor used to say, whether the Justice was any thing more than an ass. Certainly, besides a great deference for the legal opinion of his clerk, which might be quite according to the order of things, he seemed to be wonderfully under the com-

mand of his brother Squire, if squire either of them were, and indeed much more than was consistent with so much assumed consequence of his own.

"Ho—ha—ay—so—so—Hum—Humph—this is the young man, I suppose—Hum—ay—seems sickly—Young gentleman, you may sit down."

I used the permission given, for I had been much more reduced by my illness than I was aware of, and felt myself really fatigued, even by the few paces I had walked, joined to the agitation I suffered.

"And your name, young man, is—humph—ay—ha—what is it?"

"Darsie Latimer."

"Right—ay—humph—very right. Darsie Latimer is the very thing—ha—ay—where do you come from?"

"From Scotland, sir," I replied.

"A native of Scotland—a—humph—ch—how is it?"

"I am an Englishman by birth, sir."

"Right—ay—yes, you are so. But pray, Mr Darsie Latimer, have you always been called by that name, or have you any other?—Nick, write down his answers, Nick."

"As far as I remember, I never bore any other," was my answer.

"How, no?—well, I should not have thought so—Hey neighbour, would you?"

Here he looked towards the other Squire, who had thrown himself into a chair; and, with his legs stretched out before him, and his arms folded on his bosom, seemed carelessly attending to what was going forward. He answered the appeal of the Justice by saying, that perhaps the young man's memory did not go back to a very early period.

"Ah—ch—ha—you hear the gentleman—Pray, how far may your memory be pleased to run back to?—umh?"

"Perhaps, sir, to the age of three years, or a little farther."

"And will you presume to say, sir," said the Squire, drawing himself suddenly erect in his seat, and exerting the strength of his powerful voice, "that you then bore your present name?"

I was startled at the confidence with which this question was put, and in vain rummaged my memory for the means of replying. "At least," I said, "I always remember being called Darsie; children, at that early age, seldom get more than their Christian name."

"Oh, I thought so," he replied, and again stretched himself on his seat, in the same lounging posture as before.

"So you were called Darsie in your infancy," said the Justice; "and—hum—ay—when did you first take the name of Latimer?"

"I did not take it, sir; it was given to me."

"I ask you," said the Lord of the mansion, but with less severity in his voice than formerly, "whether you can remember that you were ever called Latimer, until you had that name given you in Scotland?"

"I will be candid: I cannot recollect an instance that I was so called when in England, but neither can I recollect when the name was first given me; and if any thing is to be founded on these queries and my answers, I desire my early childhood may be taken into consideration."

"Hum — ay — yes," said the justice; "all that requires consideration shall be duly considered. Young man — eh — I beg to know the name of your father and mother?"

This was galling a wound that has festered for years, and I did not endure the question so patiently as those which preceded it; but replied, "I demand, in my turn, to know if I am before an English Justice of the Peace?"

"His worship, Squire Foxley, of Foxley Hall, has been of the quorum these twenty years," said Master Nicholas.

"Then he ought to know, or you, sir, as his clerk, should inform him," said I, "that I am the complainant in this case, and that my complaint ought to be heard before I am subjected to cross-examination."

"Humph — hoy — what, ay — there is something in that, neighbour," said the poor Justice, who, blown about by every wind of doctrine, seemed desirous to attain the sanction of his brother Squire.

"I wonder at you, Foxley," said his firm-minded acquaintance; "how can you render the young man justice unless you know who he is?"

"Ha — yes — egad that's true," said Mr. Justice Foxley; "and now — looking into the matter more closely — there is, eh, upon the whole — nothing at all in what he says — so, sir, you must tell your father's name, and surname."

"It is out of my power, sir; they are not known to me, since you must needs know so much of my private affairs."

The Justice collected a great *affatus* in his cheeks, which puffed them up like those of a Dutch cherub, while his eyes seemed flying out of his head, from the effort with which he retained his breath. He then blew it forth with, — "Whew! — Hoom — poof — ha! — not know your parents, youngster? — Then I must commit you for a vagrant, I warrant you. *Omnis ignotus propter terribili*, as we used to say at Appleby school; that is, every one that is not known to the Justice, is a rogue and a vagabond. Ha! — ay, you may sneer, sir; but I question if you would have known the meaning of that Latin, unless I had told you."

I acknowledged myself obliged for a new edition of the adage, and an interpretation which I could never have reached alone and unassisted. I then proceeded to state my case with greater confidence. The Justice was *en ase*, that was clear; but it was scarcely possible he could be so utterly ignorant as not to know what was necessary in so plain a case as mine. I therefore informed him of the riot which had been committed on the Scottish side of the Solway Frith, explained how I came to be placed in my present situation, and requested of his worship to set me at liberty. I pleaded any cause with as much earnestness as I could, casting an eye from time to time upon the opposite party, who seemed entirely indifferent to all the animation with which I accused him.

As for the Justice, when at length I had ceased, as really not knowing what more to say in a case so very plain, he replied, "Ho — ay — ay — yes — wonderful! and so this is all the gratitude you shew to this good gentleman for the great charge and trouble he hath had with respect to and concerning of you?"

"He saved my life, sir, I acknowledge, on one

occasion certainly, and most probably on two; but his having done so gives him no right over my person. I am not, however, asking for any punishment or reparation; on the contrary, I am content to part friends with the gentleman, whose motives I am unwilling to suppose are bad, though his actions have been, towards me, unauthorized and violent."

This moderation, Alan, thou wilt comprehend, was not entirely dictated by my feelings towards the individual of whom I complained; there were other reasons, in which regard for him had little share. It seemed, however, as if the mildness with which I pleaded my cause had more effect upon him than any thing I had yet said. He was moved to the point of being almost out of countenance; and took snuff repeatedly, as if to gain time to stifle some degree of emotion.

But on Justice Foxley, on whom my eloquence was particularly designed to make impression, the result was much less favourable. He consulted in a whisper with Mr. Nicholas his clerk — paler, hemmed, and elevated his eyebrows, as if in scorn of my application. At length, having apparently made up his mind, he leaned back in his chair, and smoked his pipe with great energy, with a look of defiance, designed to make me aware that all my reasoning was lost on him.

At length, when I stopped, more from lack of breath than want of argument, he opened his oracular jaws, and made the following reply, interrupted by his usual interjectional ejaculations, and by long volumes of smoke: — "Hem — ay — eh — poof — And, youngster, do you think Matthew Foxley, who has been one of the quorum for these twenty years, is to be come over with such trash as would hardly cheat an apple-woman! — Poof — poof — eh! Why, ryan — eh — dost thou not know the charge is not a ballable matter — and that — hum — ay — the greatest man — poof — the Baron of Graystock himself, must stand committed! and yet you pretend to have been kidnapped by this gentleman, and robbed of property, and what not; and — eh — poof — you would persuade me all you want is to get away from him! — I do believe — eh — that it is all you want. Therefore, as you are a sort of a slip-string gentleman, and — ay — hum — a kind of idle apprentice, and something cock-brained withal, as the honest folks of the house tell me — why, you must e'en remain under custody of your guardian, till your coming of age, or my Lord Chancellor's warrant, shall give you the management of your own affairs, which, if you can gather your brains again, you will even then not be — ay — hem — poof — in particular haste to assume."

The time occupied by his worship's hums, and haws, and puffs of tobacco smoke, together with the slow and pompous manner in which he spoke, gave me a minute's space to collect my ideas, dispersed as they were by the extraordinary purport of this announcement.

"I cannot conceive, sir," I replied, "by what singular tenure this person claims my obedience as a guardian; it is a barefaced imposture — I never in my life saw him, until I came unhappily to this country, about four weeks since."

"Ay, ay — we — eh — know, and are aware — that — poof — you do not like to hear some folk's names; and that — eh — you understand me — there are things, and sounds, and matters, conversation about names, and such like, which put you

off the hooks — which I have no humour to witness. Nevertheless, Mr Darsie — or — poof — Mr Darsie Latimer — or — poof, poof — eh — ay, Mr Darsie without the Latimer — you have acknowledged as much to-day as assures me you will best be disposed of under the honourable care of my friend here — all your confessions — besides that — poof — eh — I know him to be a most responsible person — a — hay — ay — most responsible and honourable person — Can you deny this?"

"I know nothing of him," I repeated; "not even his name; and I have not, as I told you, seen him in the course of my whole life, till a few weeks since."

"Will you swear to that?" said the singular man, who seemed to await the result of this debate, secure as a rattlesnake is of the prey which has once felt its fascination. And while he said these words in deep under-tone, he withdrew his chair a little behind that of the Justice, so as to be unseen by him and his clerk, who sat upon the same side; while he bent on me a frown so portentous, that no one who has witnessed the look can forget it during the whole of his life. The furrows of the brow above the eyes became livid and almost black, and were bent into a semicircular, or rather elliptical form, above the junction of the eyebrows. I had heard such a look described in an old tale of *diallerie*, which it was my chance to be entertained with not long since; when this deep and gloomy contortion of the frontal muscles was not unsaply described, as forming the representation of a small horseshoe.

The tale, when told, awakened a dreadful vision of insanity, which the withering and blighting look now fixed on me again forged on my recollection, but with much more vivacity. Indeed I was so much surprised, and, I must add, terrified, at the vague ideas which were awakened in my mind by this fearful sight, that I kept my eyes fixed on the face in which it was exhibited, as on a frightful vision; until, passing his handkerchief a moment across his countenance, this mysterious man relaxed at once the look which had for me something so appalling. "The young man will no longer deny that he has seen me before," said he to the Justice, in a tone of complacency; "and I trust he will now be reconciled to my temporary guardianship, which may end better for him than he expects."

"Whatever I expect," I replied, summoning my scattered recollections together, "I see I am neither to expect justice nor protection from this gentleman, whose office it is to render both to the lieges. For you, sir, how strangely you have wrought yourself into the fate of an unhappy young man, or what interest you can pretend in me, you yourself only can explain. That I have seen you before, is certain; for none can forget the look with which you seem to have the power of blighting those upon whom you cast it."

The Justice seemed not very easy under this hint. "Ha! — ay," he said; "it is time to be going, neighbour. I have a many miles to ride, and I care not to ride darkling in these parts. — You and I, Mr Nicholas, must be jogging."

The Justice fumbled with his gloves, in endeavouring to draw them on hastily, and Mr Nicholas bustled to get his great-coat and whip. Their lord endeavoured to detain them, and spoke of supper and beds. Both pouring forth many thanks for his invitation, seemed as if they would much

rather not; and Mr Justice Foxley was making a score of apologies, with at least a hundred cautionary hems and eh-ehs, when the girl Dobson burst into the room, and announced a gentleman on justice business.

"What gentleman? — and whom does he want?" "He is come post on his ten toes," said the wench; "and on justice business to his worship loike. I've uphald him a gentleman, for he speaks as good Latin as the schulemaster; but, lack-a-day! he has gotten a queer mop of a wig."

The gentleman, thus announced and described, bounced into the room. But I have already written as much as fills a sheet of my paper, and my singular embarrassments press so hard on me, that I have matter to fill another from what followed the intrusion of — my dear Alan — your crazy client — Poor Peter Peebles!

CHAPTER VII.

LATIMER'S JOURNAL, IN CONTINUATION.

Sheet 2.

I HAVE rarely in my life, till the last alarming days, known what it was to sustain a moment's real sorrow. What I called such, was, I am now well convinced, only the weariness of mind, which, having nothing actually present to complain of, turns upon itself, and becomes anxious about the past and the future; those periods with which human life has so little connection, that Scripture itself hath said, "Sufficient for the day is the evil thereof."

If, therefore, I have sometimes abused prosperity, by murmuring at my unknown birth and uncertain rank in society, I will make amends by bearing my present real adversity with patience and courage; and, if I can, even with gaiety. What can they — dare they, do to me! — Foxley, I am persuaded, is a real Justice of Peace, and country gentleman of estate, though (wonderful to tell!) he is an ass notwithstanding; and his functionary in the drab coat must have a strew'd guess at the consequences of being accessory to an act of murder or kidnapping. Men invite to meet witnesses to deed of darkness. I have also — Alan, I have hopes, arising out of the family of the oppressor himself. I am encouraged to believe that G. M. is likely again to enter on the field. More I dare not here say; nor must I drop a hint which another eye than thine might be able to construe. Enough, my feelings are lighter than they have been; and, though fear and wonder are still around me, they are unable entirely to overcloud the horizon.

Even when I saw the spectral form of the old scarecrow of the Parliament-House rush into the apartment where I had undergone so singular an examination, I thought of thy connection with him, and could almost have parodied Lear —

"Death! — nothing could have thus subdued nature To such a lowman, but his 'learned lawyers.'"

He was e'en as we have seen him of yore, Alan, when, rather to keep thee company than to follow my own bent, I formerly frequented the halls of justice. The only addition to his dress, in the

capacity of a traveller, was a pair of boots, that seemed as if they might have seen the field of Sheriff-moor; so large and heavy, that tied as they were to the creature's wearied hands with large bunches of worsted tape of various colours, they looked as if he had been dragging them along, either for a wager, or by way of penance.

Regardless of the surprised looks of the party on whom he thus intruded himself, Peter blundered into the middle of the apartment, with his head charged like a ram's in the act of butting, and saluted them thus:—

"Gude day to ye, gude day to your honours—Is't here they sell the fugie warrants?"

I observed that on his entrance, my friend—or enemy—drew himself back, and placed himself as if he would rather avoid attracting the observation of the new-comer. I did the same myself, as far as I was able; for I thought it likely that Mr Peebles might recognize me, as indeed I was too frequently among the group of young juridical aspirants who used to amuse themselves by putting cases for Peter's solution, and playing him worse tricks; yet I was uncertain whether I had better avail myself of our acquaintance to have the advantage, such as it might be, of his evidence before the magistrate, or whether to make him, if possible, bearer of a letter which might procure me more effectual assistance. I resolved, therefore, to be guided by circumstances, and to watch carefully that nothing might escape me. I drew back as far as I could, and even reconnoitred the door and passage, to consider whether absolute escape might not be practicable. But there paraded Cristal Nixon, whose little black eyes, sharp as those of a basilisk, seemed the instant when they encountered mine, to penetrate my purpose.

I sat down, as much out of sight of all parties as I could, and listened to the dialogue which followed—a dialogue how much more interesting to me than any I could have conceived, in which Peter Peebles was to be one of the *Dramatis Personæ*!

"Is it here where ye sell the warrants—the fugies, ye ken?" said Peter.

"Hey—eh—what?" said Justice Foxley; "what the devil does the fellow mean?—What would you have a warrant for?"

"It is to apprehend a young lawyer that is in *meditations fugas*; for he has ta'en my memorial and pleaded my cause, and a good fee I gave him, and as muckle brannly as he could drink that day at his father's house—he loes the brandy ower weel for sae youthful a creature."

"And what has this drunken young dog of a lawyer done to you, that you are come to me—eh—ha! Has he robbed you? Not unlikely if he be a lawyer—eh—Nick—ha!" said Justice Foxley.

"He has robb'd me of himself, sir," answered Peter; "of his help, comfort, aid, maintenance, and assistance, whilk, as he counsel'd to a client, he is bound to yield me, *ratione officii*—that is it, ye see. He has pouched my fee, and drunken a mucklekin of brandy, and now he's ower the march, and left my cause, half won half lost—as dead a heat as e'er was run ower the back-bands. Now, I was advised by some cunning liddies that an'used to crack a bit law wi' me in the House, that the best thing I could do was to take heart o' grace and set out after him; so I have taken post on my ain shanks,

forby a cart in a cart, or the like. I got wind of him in Dumfries, and now I have run him ower to the English side, and I want a fugie warrant against him."

How did my heart throb at this information, dearest Alan! Thou art near me then, and I well know with what kind purpose; thou hast abandoned all to fly to my assistance; and no wonder that, knowing thy friendship and faith, thy sound sagacity and persevering disposition, "my bonny lord should now sit lightly on his throne;" that gaiety should almost involuntarily hover on my pen; and that my heart should beat like that of a general, responsive to the drums of his advancing army, without whose help the battle must have been lost.

I did not suffer myself to be startled by this joyous surprise but continued to bend my strictest attention to what followed, among this singular party. That Poor Peter Peebles had been put on this widdow's chase, by some of his juvenile advisers in the Parliament House, he himself had hinted; but he spoke with much confidence, and the Justice, who seemed to have some secret apprehensions of being put to trouble in the matter, and, as sometimes occurs on the English frontier, a jealousy lest the superior acuteness of their northern neighbours might overreach their own simplicity, turned to his clerk with a perplexed countenance.

"Eh—eh—Nick—d—n thee—Hast thou got nothing to say? This is more Scots law, I take it, and more Scotsmen." (Here he cast a side-glance at the owner of the mansion, and winked to his clerk.) "I would Solway were as deep as it is wide, and we had then some chance of keeping of them out."

Nicholas conversed an instant aside with the supplicant, and then reported:—

"The man wants a border-warrant, I think; but they are only granted for debt—now he wants one to catch a lawyer."

"And what for no?" answered Peter Peebles, doggedly; "what for no, I would be glad to ken! If a day's labour were refused to work, ye'll grant a warrant to gar him do out his daur—if a wench queen an away from her hair, ye'll send her back to her heuk again—if we mickle as a collier or a salter make a moonlight sitting, ye will cleek him by the back-spaul in a minute of time,—and yet the damage canna amount to mair than a scorefu' of coals, and a forpit or twa of saut; and here is a chield takes leg from his engagement, and damages me to the tune of sax thousand pounds sterling; that is, three thousand that I should win, and three thousand mair that I am like to lose; and you that ca' yourself a justice canna help a poor man to catch the rinauray! A bouny like justice I am like to get among ye!"

"The fellow must be drunk," said the clerk.

"Black fasting from all but sin," replied the supplicant; "I havena had mair than a mouthful of cauld water since I passed the Border, and deil a sne of ye is like to say to me, 'Dug, will ye drink?'"

The Justice seemed moved by this appeal. "Hem—tush, man," replied he; "thou speak'st to us as if thou wert in presence of one of thine own beggary justices—get down stairs—get something to eat, man, (with permission of my friend to make so free in his house,) and a mouthful to drink, and I warrant we get ye such justice as will please ye."

"I winna refuse your neighbourly offer," said Poor Peter Peebles, making his bow; "muckle grace be wi' your honour, and wisdom to guide you in this extraordinary cause."

When I saw Peter Peebles about to retire from the room, I could not forbear an effort to obtain from him such evidences as might give me some credit with the Justice. I stepped forward, therefore, and, saluting him, asked him if he remembered me!

After a stare or two, and a long pinch of snuff, recollection seemed suddenly to dawn on Peter Peebles. "Recollect ye!" he said; "by my troth do I.—Haud him a grip, gentlemen!—constables, keep him fast! where that ill-deedy hempy is, ye are sure that Alan Fairford is not far off.—Haud him fast, Master Constable; I charge ye wi' him, for I am mista'en if he is not at the bottom of this rinaway business. He was aye getting the silly callant Alan awa wi' gigs, and horse, and the like of fiint, to Rowlin, and Prestonpans, and a' the idle gatas he could think of. He's a rinaway apprentice, that ene."

"Mr Peebles," I said, "do not do me wrang. I am sure you can say no harm of me justly, but can satisfy those gentlemen, if you will, that I am a student of law in Edinburgh—Darsie Latimer by name."

"Me satisfy! how can I satisfy the gentlemen," answered Peter, "that am sae far from being satisfied myself! I ken naething about your name, and can only testify, *nikil novit in causa*."

"A pretty witness you have brought forward in your favour," said Mr Foxley. "But—ha—ay—I'll ask him a question or two.—Pray, friend, will you take your oath to this youth being a rinaway apprentice?"

"Sir," said Peter, "I will make oath to any thing in reason; when a case comes to my oath it's a won cause: But I am in some haste to prye your worship's good cheer;" for Peter had become much more respectful in his demeanour towards the Justice, since he had heard some intimation of dinner.

"You shall have—eh—hum—ay—a bellyful, if it be possible to fill it. First let me know if this young man be really what he pretends.—Nick, make his affidavit."

"Ow, he is just a wud harum-scarum creature, that wad never take to his studies; daft, sir, clean daft."

"Daft!" said the Justice; "what d'ye mean by daft—eh?"

"Just Fish," replied Peter; "wow!—a wee bit by the East-Nook or sae; it's a common case—the ae half of the world thinks theither daft. I have met with folk in my day, that thought I was daft myself; and, for my part, I think our Court of Session clean daft, that have had the great cause o' Peebles against Plainstances before them for this score of years, and have never been able to ding the bottom out of it yet."

"I cannot make out a word of his cursed brogue," said the Cumbrian Justice; "can you, neighbour—ah! What can he mean by daft?"

"He means mad," said the party appealed to, thrown off his guard by impatience of this protracted discussion.

"Ye have it—ye have it," said Peter; "that is, not clean skivie, but—"

Here he stopped, and fixed his eye on the person

he addressed with an air of joyful recognition.—"Ay, ay, Mr Herries of Birrenswork, is this you ainsell in blood and bane! I thought ye had been hanged at Kennington Common, or Hairiebie, or some of these places, after the bonny ploy ye made in the forty-five."

"I believe you are mistaken, friend," said Herries, sternly, with whose name and designation I was thus made unexpectedly acquainted.

"The deil a bit," answered the undaunted Peter Peebles; "I mind ye weel, for ye lodged in my house the great year of forty-five, for a great year it was; the Grand Rebellion broke out, and my cause—the great cause—Peebles against Plainstances, *et per contra*—was called in the beginning of the winter Session, and would have been heard, but that there was a surcease of justice, with your plaids, and your piping, and your nonsense."

"I tell you, fellow," said Herries, yet more fiercely, "you have confused me with some of the other furniture of your crazy pate."

"Speak like a gentleman, sir," answered Peebles; "these are not legal phrases, Mr Herries of Birrenswork. Speak in form of law, or I suld bid ye gude day, sir. I have nae pleasure in speaking to proud folk, though I am willing to answer any thing in a legal way; so if you are for a crack about auld langsyne, and the spleors that you and Captain Redgimlot used to breed in my house, and the girded cask of brandy that ye drank and ne'er thought of paying for it, (not that I minded it muckle in thae days, though I have felt a lack of it sin syne,) why I will waste an hour on ye at any time.—And where is Captain Redgimlot now? he was a wild chap, like yoursell, though they arena sae keen after you poor bodies for these some years bygane; the heading and hanging is weel ower now—awful job—awful job—will ye try my sneeshing?"

He concluded his desultory speech by thrusting out his large bony paw, filled with a Scottish mull of huge dimensions, which Herries, who had been standing like one petrified by the assurance of this unexpected address, rejected with a contemptuous motion of his hand, which spilled some of the contents of the box.

"Awel, awel," said Peter Peebles, totally unabashed by the repulse, "e'en as ye like, a wilful man maun hae his way; but," he added, stooping down and endeavouring to gather the spilled snuff from the polished floor, "I canna afford to lose my sneeshing for a' that ye are gumples-foisted wi' me."

My attention had been keenly awakened, during this extraordinary and unexpected scene. I watched, with as much attention as my own agitation permitted me to command, the effect produced on the parties concerned. It was evident that our friends Peter Peebles, had unwarily let out something which altered the sentiments of Justice Foxley and his clerk towards Mr Herries, with whom, until he was known and acknowledged under that name, they had appeared to be so intimate. They talked with each other aside, looked at a paper or two which the clerk selected from the contents of a huge black pocketbook, and seemed, under the influence of fear and uncertainty, totally at a loss what line of conduct to adopt.

Herries made a different, and far more interesting figure. However little Peter Peebles might

resemble the angel Ithuriel, the appearance of Herries, his high and scornful demeanour, vexed at what seemed detection, yet fearless of the consequences, and regarding the whispering magistrate and his clerk with looks in which contempt predominated over anger or anxiety, bore, in my opinion, no slight resemblance to

— "The regal port
And faded splendour wane" —

with which the poet has invested the detected King of the powers of the air.

As he glanced round, with a look which he had endeavoured to compose to haughty indifference, his eye encountered mine, and, I thought, at the first glance sunk beneath it. But he instantly rallied his natural spirit, and returned me one of those extraordinary looks, by which he could convert so strangely the wrinkles on his forehead, I started; but, angry at myself for my pusillanimity, I answered him by a look of the same kind, and catching the reflection of my countenance in a large antique mirror which stood before me, I started again at the real or imaginary resemblance which my countenance, at that moment, bore to that of Herries. Surely my fate is somehow strangely interwoven with that of this mysterious individual. I had no time at present to speculate upon the subject, for the subsequent conversation demanded all my attention.

The Justice addressed Herries, after a pause of about five minutes, in which all parties seemed at some loss how to proceed. He spoke with embarrassment, and his faltering voice, and the long intervals which divided his sentences, seemed to indicate fear of him whom he addressed.

"Neighbour," he said, "I could not have thought this; or, if I — oh — did think — in a corner of my own mind as it were — that you, I say — that you might have unluckily engaged — oh — the matter of the forty-five — there was still time to have forgot all that."

"And is it so singular that a man should have been out in the forty-five?" said Herries, with contemptuous composure; — "your father, I think, Mr Foxley, was out with Derwentwater in the fifteen."

"And lost half of his estate," answered Foxley, with more rapidity than usual; "and was very near — hem — being hanged into the boot. But this is — another guess job — for — oh — fifteen is not forty-five; and my father had a remission, and you, I take it, have none."

"Perhaps I have," said Herries, indifferently; "or if I have not, I am but in the case of half a dozen others whom government do not think worth looking after at this time of day, so they give no offence or disturbance."

"But you have given both, sir," said Nicholas Faggot, the clerk, who, having some petty provincial situation, as I have since understood, deemed himself bound to be zealous for government. "Mr Justice Foxley cannot be answerable for letting you pass free, now your name and surname have been spoken plainly out. There are warrants out against you from the Secretary of State's office."

"A proper allegation, Mr Attorney? that, at the distance of so many years, the Secretary of State should trouble himself about the unfortunate relics of a ruined cause," answered Mr Herries.

"But if it be so," said the clerk, who seemed to

assume more confidence upon the composure of Herries's demeanour; "and if cause has been given by the conduct of a gentleman himself, who hath been, it is alleged, raking up old matters, and mixing them with new subjects of disaffection — I say, if it be so, I should advise the party, in his wisdom, to surrender himself quietly into the lawful custody of the next Justice of Peace — Mr Foxley, suppose — where, and by whom, the matter should be regularly inquired into. I am only putting a case," he added, watching with apprehension the effect which his words were likely to produce upon the party to whom they were addressed.

"And were I to receive such advice," said Herries, with the same composure as before — "putting the case, as you say, Mr Faggot — I should request to see the warrant which countenanced such a scandalous proceeding."

Mr Nicholas, by way of answer, placed in his hand a paper, and seemed anxiously to expect the consequences which were to ensue. Mr Herries looked it over with the same equanimity as before, and then continued, "And were such a scrawl as this presented to me in my own house, I would throw it into the chimney, and Mr Faggot upon the top of it."

Accordingly, seconding the word with the action, he flung the warrant into the fire with one hand, and fixed the other, with a stern and irresistible gripe, on the breast of the attorney, who, totally unable to contend with him, in either personal strength or mental energy, trembled like a chicken in the raven's clutch. He got off, however, for the fright; for Herries, having probably made him fully sensible of the strength of his grasp, released him, with a scornful laugh.

"Deforcement — spulzie — stouthrief — masterful rescue!" exclaimed Peter Peebles, scandalized at the resistance offered to the law in the person of Nicholas Faggot. But his shrill exclamations were drowned in the thundering voice of Herries, who, calling upon Cristal Nixon, ordered him to take the bawling fool down stairs, fill his belly, and then give him a guinea, and thrust him out of doors. Under such injunctions, Peter easily suffered himself to be withdrawn from the scene.

Herries then turned to the Justice, whose visage, wholly abandoned by the rubicund hue which so lately beamed upon it, hung out the same pale livery as that of his dismayed clerk. "Old friend and acquaintance," he said, "you came here at my request, on a friendly errand, to convince this silly young man of the right which I have over his person for the present. I trust you do not intend to make your visit the pretext of disquieting me about other matters! All the world knows that I have been living at large, in these northern counties, for some months, not to say years, and might have been apprehended at any time, had the necessities of the state required, or my own behaviour deserved it. But no English magistrate has been ungenerous enough to trouble a gentleman under misfortune, on account of political opinions and disputes, which have been long ended by the success of the reigning powers. I trust, my good friend, you will not endanger yourself, by taking any other view of the subject than you have done ever since we were acquainted!"

The Justice answered with more readiness, as well as more spirit than usual, "Neighbour In-

goldsbey — what you say — is — eh — in some sort true; and when you were coming and going at markets, horse-races, and cock-fights, fairs, bunts, and such like — it was — eh — neither my business nor my wish to dispel — I say — to inquire into and dispel the mysteries which hung about you; for while you were a good companion in the field, and over a bottle now and then — I did not — eh — think it necessary to ask — into your private affairs. And if I thought you were — ahem — somewhat unfortunate in former undertakings, and enterprises, and connections, which might cause you to live unsettledly and more private, I could have — eh — very little pleasure — to aggravate your case by interfering, or requiring explanations, which are often more easily asked than given. But when there are warrants and witnesses to names — and those names, christian and surname, belong to — eh — an attainted person — charged — I trust falsely — with — ahem — taking advantage of modern broils and heart-burnings to renew our civil disturbances, the case is altered; and I must — ahem — do my duty."

The Justice got on his feet as he concluded this speech, and looked as bold as he could. I drew close beside him and his clerk, Mr Faggot, thinking the moment favourable for my own liberation, and intimated to Mr Foxley my determination to stand by him. But Mr Herries only laughed at the menacing posture which we assumed. "My good neighbour," said he, "you talk of a witness — Is you crazy beggar a fit witness in an affair of this nature?"

"But you do not deny that you are Mr Herries of Birrenswort, mentioned in the Secretary of State's warrant?" said Mr Foxley.

"How can I deny or own any thing about it?" said Herries, with a sneer. "There is no such warrant in existence now; its ashes, like the poor traitor whose doom it threatened, have been dispersed to the four winds of heaven. There is now no warrant in the world."

"But you will not deny," said the Justice, "that you were the person named in it; and that — eh — your own act destroyed it?"

"I will neither deny my name nor my actions," replied Mr Herries, "when called upon by competent authority to avow or defend them. But I will resist all impertinent attempts either to intrude into my private motives, or to control my person. I am quite well prepared to do so; and I trust that you, my good neighbour and brother sportsman, in your expostulation, and my friend Mr Nicholas Faggot here, in his humble advice and petition that I should surrender myself, will consider yourselves as having amply discharged your duty to King George and Government."

The cold and ironical tone in which he made this declaration; the look and attitude, so nobly expressive of absolute confidence in his own superior strength and energy, seemed to complete the impression which had already shewn itself on the side of those whom he addressed.

The Justice looked to the Clerk — the Clerk to the Justice; the former *as'd*, *ed'd*, without bringing forth an articulate syllable; the latter only said, "As the warrant is destroyed, Mr Justice, I presume you do not mean to proceed with the arrest?"

"Hum — ay — why, no — Nicholas — it would

not be quite advisable — and as the Forty-five was an old affair — and — hem — as my friend here will, I hope, *ape* his error — that is, if he has not seen it already — and renounce the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender — I mean no harm, neighbour — I think we — as we have no posse, or constables, or the like — should order our horses — and, in one word, look the matter over."

"Judiciously resolved," said the person whom this decision affected; "but before you go, I trust you will drink and be friends!"

"Why," said the Justice, rubbing his brow, "our business has been — hem — rather a thirsty one."

"Cristal Nixon," said Mr Herries, "let us have a cool tankard instantly, large enough to quench the thirst of the whole communion."

While Cristal was absent on this genial errand, there was a pause, of which I endeavoured to avail myself, by bringing back the discourse to my own concerns. "Sir," I said to Justice Foxley, "I have no direct business with your late discussion with Mr Herries, only just thus far — You leave me, a loyal subject of King George, an unwilling prisoner in the hands of a person whom you have reason to believe unfriendly to the King's cause. I humbly submit that this is contrary to your duty as a magistrate, and that you ought to make Mr Herries aware of the illegality of his proceedings, and take steps for my rescue, either upon the spot, or, at least, as soon as possible after you have left this case —"

"Young man," said Mr Justice Foxley, "I would have you remember you are under the power, the lawful power — ahem — of your guardian."

"He calls himself so, indeed," I replied; "but he has shewn no evidence to establish so absurd a claim; and if he had, his circumstances, as an attainted traitor excommunicated from pardon, would void such a right if it existed. I do therefore desire you, Mr Justice, and you, his clerk, to consider my situation, and afford me relief at your peril."

"Here is a young fellow now," said the Justice, with much unembarrassed looks, "thinks that I carry the whole statute law of England in my head, and a *poore comitalis* to execute them in my pocket! Why, what good would my interference do? — but — hum — eh — I will speak to your guardian in your favour."

He took Mr Herries aside, and seemed indeed to urge something upon him with much earnestness; and perhaps such a species of intercession was all which, in the circumstances, I was entitled to expect from him.

They often looked at me as they spoke together; and as Cristal Nixon entered with a huge four-pottle tankard, filled with the beverage his master had demanded, Herries turned away from Mr Foxley somewhat impatiently, saying with emphasis, "I give you my word of honour, that you have not the slightest reason to apprehend any thing on his account." He then took up the tankard, and saying aloud in Gaelic, "*Glaist an Reip*," just tasted the liquor, and handed the tankard to Justice Foxley, who, to avoid the dilemma of pledging him to what might be the Pretender's health, drank to Mr Herries's own, with much pointed solemnity, but in a draught far less moderate.

The clerk imitated the example of his principal,

and I was fain to follow their example, for anxiety and fear are at least as thirsty as sorrow is said to be. In a word, we exhausted the composition of ale, sillery, lemon-juice, nutmeg, and other good things, stranded upon the silver bottom of the tankard the huge toast, as well as the roasted orange, which had whilesome floated jollily upon the brim, and rendered legible Dr Byrom's celebrated lines ungraved thereon—

"God bless the King!—God bless the Faith's defender
God bless—No harm is blessing the Pretender.
Who that Pretender is, and who that King,—
God bless us all!—is quite another thing."

I had time enough to study this effusion of the Jacobite muse, while the Justice was engaged in the somewhat tedious ceremony of taking leave. That of Mr Faggot was less ceremonious; but I suspect something besides empty compliment passed betwixt him and Mr Herries; for I remarked that the latter slipped a piece of paper into the hand of the former, which might perhaps be a little atonement for the rashness with which he had burnt the warrant, and imposed no gentle hand on the respectable minion of the law by whom it was exhibited; and I observed that he made this propitiation in such a manner as to be secret from the worthy clerk's principal.

When this was arranged, the party took leave of each other, with much formality on the part of Squire Foxley, amongst whose adieux the following phrase was chiefly remarkable:—"I presume you do not intend to stay long in these parts?"

"Not for the present, Justice, you may be sure; there are good reasons to the contrary. But I have no doubt of arranging my affairs so that we shall speedily have sport together again."

He went to wait upon the Justice to the court-yard; and, as he did so, commanded Cristal Nixon to see that I returned into my apartment. Knowing it would be to no purpose to resist or tamper with that stubborn functionary, I obeyed in silence, and was once more a prisoner in my former quarters.

CHAPTER VIII.

LATIMER'S JOURNAL, IN CONTINUATION.

I SPENT more than an hour, after returning to the apartment which I may call my prison, in reducing to writing the singular circumstances which I had just witnessed. Mighthought I could now form some guess at the character of Mr Herries, upon whose name and situation the late scene had thrown considerable light;—one of those fanatical Jacobites, doubtless, whose arms, not twenty years since, had shaken the British throne, and some of whom, though their party daily diminished in numbers, energy, and power, retained still an inclination to renew the attempt they had found so desperate. He was indeed perfectly different from the sort of zealous Jacobites whom it had been my luck hitherto to meet with. Old ladies of family over their byson, and gray-haired jaihrs over their punch, I had often heard utter a little harmless treason; while the former remembered having led down a dance with the Chevalier, and the latter recounted the feats they had performed at Preston, Clifton, and Falkirk.

The disaffection of such persons was too unimportant to excite the attention of government. I had heard, however, that there still existed partisans of the Stewart family, of a more daring and dangerous description; men who, furnished with gold from Rome, moved, secretly and in disguise, through the various classes of society, and endeavoured to keep alive the expiring zeal of their party.

I had no difficulty in assigning an important post among this class of persons, whose agency and exertion are only doubted by those who look on the surface of things, to this Mr Herries, whose mental energies, as well as his personal strength and activity, seemed to qualify him well to act so dangerous a part; and I knew that, all along the Western Border, both in England and Scotland, there are so many Nonjurers, that such a person may reside there, with absolute safety, unless it becomes, in a very especial degree, the object of the government to secure his person; and which purpose, even then, might be disappointed by early intelligence, given in the case of Mr Foxley, by the unwillingness of provincial magistrates to interfere in what is now considered an invidious pursuit of the unfortunate.

There have, however, been rumours lately, as if the present state of the nation, or at least of some disaffected provinces, agitated by a variety of causes, but particularly by the unpopularity of the present administration, may seem to this species of agitators, a favourable period for recommencing their intrigues; while, on the other hand, government may not, at such a crisis, be inclined to look upon them with the contempt which a few years ago would have been their most appropriate punishment.

That men should be found rash enough to throw away their services and lives in a desperate cause, is nothing new in history, which abounds with instances of similar devotion—that Mr Herries is such an enthusiast, is no less evident; but all this explains not his conduct towards me. Had he sought to make me a proselyte to his ruined cause, violence and compulsion were arguments very unlikely to prevail with any generous spirit. But even if such were his object, of what use to him could be the acquisition of a single reluctant partisan, who could bring only his own person to support any quarrel which he might adopt? He had claimed over me the rights of a guardian; he had more than hinted that I was in a state of mind which could not dispense with the authority of such a person. Was this man, so sternly desperate in his purpose,—he who seemed willing to take on his own shoulders the entire support of a cause which had been ruinous to thousands,—was he the person that had the power of deciding on my fate? Was it from him those dangers flowed, to secure me against which I had been educated under such circumstances of secrecy and protection?

And if this was so, of what nature was the claim which he asserted?—Was it that of propinquity? And did I share the blood perhaps the features, of this singular being?—Strange as it may seem, a thrill of awe, which shot across my mind at that instant, was not unmingled with a wild and mysterious feeling of wonder, almost amounting to pleasure. I remembered the reflection of my own face in the mirror, at one striking moment during the singular interview of the day, and I hastened to the outward apartment to consult a glass which hung

there, whether it were possible for my countenance to be again contorted into the peculiar frown which so much resembled the terrific looks of Herries. But I folded my brows in vain into a thousand complicated wrinkles, and I was obliged to conclude, either that the supposed mark on my brow was altogether imaginary, or that it could not be called forth by voluntary effort; or, in fine, what seemed most likely, that it was such a resemblance as the imagination traces in the embers of a wood fire, or among the varied veins of marble, distinct at one time, and obscure or invisible at another, according as the combination of lines strikes the eye, or impresses the fancy.

While I was moulding my visage like a mad player, the door suddenly opened, and the girl of the house entered. Angry and ashamed at being detected in my singular occupation, I turned round sharply, and, I suppose, chance produced the change on my features which I had been in vain labouring to call forth.

The girl started back, with her "Don't ye look so now—don't ye, for love's sake—you be as like the ould Squire as—But here a comes," she said, huddling away out of the room; "and if you want a third, there is none but ould Harry, as I know of, that can match ye for a brent broo!"

As the girl muttered this exclamation, and hastened out of the room, Herries entered. He stopped on observing that I had looked again to the mirror, anxious to trace the look by which the wench had undoubtedly been terrified. He seemed to guess what was passing on my mind, for, as I turned towards him, he observed, "Doubt not that it is stamped on your forehead—the fatal mark of our race; though it is not now so apparent as it will become when age and sorrow, and the traces of stormy passions, and of bitter penitence, shall have drawn their furrows on your brow."

"Mysterious man," I replied, "I know not of what you speak; your language is as dark as your purposes."

"Sit down, then," he said, "and listen; thus far, at least, must the veil of which you complain be raised. When withdrawn, it will only display guilt and sorrow—guilt followed by strange penalty, and sorrow, which Providence has entailed upon the posterity of the mourners."

He paused a moment, and commenced his narrative, which he told with the air of one, who, remote as the events were which he recited, took still the deepest interest in them. The tone of his voice, which I have already described as rich and powerful, aided by its inflections the effects of his story, which I will endeavour to write down, as nearly as possible, in the very words which he used.

"It was not of late years that the English learned, that their best chance of conquering their independent neighbours must be by introducing amongst them division and civil war. You need not be reminded of the state of thralldom to which Scotland was reduced by the unhappy wars betwixt the domestic factions of Bruce and Baliol; nor how, after Scotland had been emancipated from a foreign yoke, by the conduct and valour of the immortal Bruce, the whole fruits of the triumphs of Bannockburn were lost in the dreadful defeats of Dupplin and Halidon; and Edward Baliol, the minion and feudatory of his namesake of England, seemed, for a brief season, in safe and uncontested possession

of the throne so lately occupied by the greatest general and wisest prince in Europe. But the experience of Bruce had not died with him. There were many who had shared his martial labours, and all remembered the successful efforts by which, under circumstances as disadvantageous as those of his son, he had achieved the liberation of Scotland.

"The usurper, Edward Baliol, was feasting with a few of his favourite retainers in the Castle of Annan, when he was suddenly surprised by a chosen band of insurgent patriots. Their chiefs were, Douglas, Randolph, the young Earl of Moray, and Sir Simon Fraser; and their success was so complete, that Baliol was obliged to fly for his life scarcely clothed, and on a horse which there was no leisure to saddle. It was of importance to seize his person, if possible, and his flight was closely pursued by a valiant knight of Norman descent, whose family had been long settled in the marches of Dumfriesshire. Their Norman appellation was Fitz-Aldin, but this knight, from the great slaughter which he had made of the Southron, and the reluctance which he had shewn to admit them to quarters during the former war of that bloody period, had acquired the name of Redgauntlet, which he transmitted to his posterity."

"Redgauntlet!" I involuntarily repeated.

"Yes, Redgauntlet," said my alleged guardian, looking at me keenly; "does that name recall any associations to your mind?"

"No," I replied, "except that I had lately heard it given to the hero of a supernatural legend."

"There are many such current concerning the family," he answered; and then proceeded in his narrative.

"Alberick Redgauntlet, the first of his house so termed, was, as may be supposed from his name, of a stern and inflexible disposition, which had been rendered more so by family discord. An only son, now a youth of eighteen, shared so much the haughty spirit of his father, that he became impatient of domestic control, resisted paternal authority, and finally fled from his father's house, renounced his political opinions, and awakened his mortal displeasure by joining the adherents of Baliol. It was said that his father cursed, in his wrath, his degenerate offspring, and swore that if they met, he should perish by his hand. Meantime, circumstances seemed to promise atonement for this great deprivation. The lady of Alberick Redgauntlet was again, after many years, in a situation which afforded her husband the hope of a more dutiful heir.

"But the delicacy and deep interest of his wife's condition did not prevent Alberick from engaging in the undertaking of Douglas and Moray. He had been the most forward in the attack of the castle, and was now foremost in the pursuit of Baliol, eagerly engaged in dispersing or cutting down the few daring followers who endeavoured to protect the usurper in his flight.

"As these were successively routed or slain the formidable Redgauntlet, the mortal enemy of the House of Baliol, was within two leagues' length of the fugitive Edward Baliol, in a narrow pass, when a youth, one of the last who attended the usurper in his flight, threw himself between them, received the shock of the pursuer, and was unhorsed and overthrown. The helmet rolled from

his head, and the beams of the sun, then rising over the Solway, shewed Redgauntlet the features of his disobedient son, in the livery, and wearing the cognizance, of the usurper.

"Redgauntlet beheld his son lying before his horse's feet; but he also saw Balioi, the usurper of the Scottish crown, still, as it seemed, within his grasp, and separated from him only by the prostrate body of his overthrown adherent. Without pausing to inquire whether young Edward was wounded, he dashed his spurs into his horse, meaning to leap over him, but was unhappily frustrated in his purpose. The steed made indeed a bound forward, but was unable to clear the body of the youth, and with its hind foot struck him in the forehead, as he was in the act of rising. The blow was mortal. It is needless to add, that the pursuit was checked, and Balioi escaped.

"Redgauntlet, ferocious as he is described, was yet overwhelmed with the thoughts of the crime he had committed. When he returned to his castle, it was to encounter new domestic sorrows. His wife had been prematurely seized with the pangs of labour, upon hearing the dreadful catastrophe which had taken place. The birth of an infant boy cost her her life. Redgauntlet sat by her corpse for more than twenty-four hours without changing either feature or posture, so far as his terrified domestics could observe. The Abbot of Dundrennan preached consolation to him in vain. Douglas, who came to visit in his affliction a patriot of such distinguished zeal, was more successful in rousing his attention. He caused the trumpets to sound an English point of war in the court-yard, and Redgauntlet at once sprung to his arms, and seemed restored to the recollection, which had been lost in the extent of his misery.

"From that moment, whatever he might feel inwardly, he gave way to no outward emotion. Douglas caused his infant to be brought; but even the iron-hearted soldiers were struck with horror to observe, that, by the mysterious law of nature, the cause of his mother's death, and the evidence of his father's guilt, was stamped on the innocent face of the babe, whose brow was distinctly marked by the miniature resemblance of a horseshoe. Redgauntlet himself pointed it out to Douglas, saying, with a ghastly smile, 'It should have been bloody.'

"Moved, as he was, to compassion for his brother-in-arms, and steeled against all softer feelings by the habits of civil war, Douglas shuddered at this sight, and displayed a desire to leave the house which was doomed to be the scene of such horrors. As his parting advice, he exhorted Alberick Redgauntlet to make a pilgrimage to Saint Ninian's of Whiteherne, then esteemed a shrine of great sanctity; and departed with a precipitation, which might have aggravated, had that been possible, the forlorn state of his unhappy friend. But that seems to have been incapable of admitting any addition. Sir Alberick caused the bodies of his slaughtered son and the mother to be laid side by side in the ancient chapel of his house, after he had used the skill of a celebrated surgeon of that time to embalm them; and it was said, that for many weeks he spent some hours nightly in the vault where they reposed.

"At length he undertook the proposed pilgrimage to Whiteherne, where he confessed himself

for the first time since his misfortune, and was absolved by an aged monk, who afterwards died in the odour of sanctity. It is said, that it was then foretold to the Redgauntlet, that on account of his unshaken patriotism, his family should continue to be powerful amid the changes of future times; but that, in detestation of his unrelenting cruelty to his own issue, Heaven had decreed that the valour of his race should always be fruitless, and that the cause which they espoused should never prosper.

"Submitting to such penance as was there imposed, Sir Alberick went, it is thought, on a pilgrimage either to Rome, or to the Holy Sepulchre itself. He was universally considered as dead; and it was not till thirteen years afterwards, that, in the great battle of Durlam, fought between David Bruce and Queen Philippa of England, a knight, bearing a horseshoe for his crest, appeared in the van of the Scottish army, distinguishing himself by his reckless and desperate valour; who being at length overpowered and slain, was finally discovered to be the brave and unhappy Sir Alberick Redgauntlet."

"And has the fatal sign," said I, when Herries had ended his narrative, "descended on all the posterity of this unhappy house?"

"It has been so handed down from antiquity, and is still believed," said Herries. "But perhaps there is, in the popular evidence, something of that fancy which creates what it sees. Certainly, as other families have peculiarities by which they are distinguished, this of Redgauntlet is marked in most individuals by a singular indenture of the forehead, supposed to be derived from the son of Alberick, their ancestor, and brother to the unfortunate Edward, who had perished in so pitious a manner. It is certain there seems to have been a fate upon the House of Redgauntlet, which has been on the losing side in almost all the civil broils which have divided the kingdom of Scotland from David Bruce's days, till the late valiant and unsuccessful attempt of the Chevalier Charles Edward."

He concluded with a deep sigh on one whom the subject had involved in a train of painful reflections.

"And am I then," I exclaimed, "descended from this unhappy race?—Do you belong to it?—And if so, why do I sustain restraint and hard usage at the hands of a relation?"

"Inquire no farther for the present," he said. "The line of conduct which I am pursuing towards you, is dictated not by choice, but by necessity. You were withdrawn from the bosom of your family, and the care of your legal guardian, by the timidity and ignorance of a doting mother, who was incapable of estimating the arguments or feelings of those who prefer honour and principle to fortune, and even to life. The young hawk, accustomed only to the fostering care of its dam, must be tamed by darkness and sleeplessness, ere it is trusted on the wing for the purposes of the falconer."

I was appalled at this declaration, which seemed to threaten a long continuance, and a dangerous termination, of my captivity. I deemed it best, however, to shew some spirit, and at the same time to mingle a tone of consolation. "Mr Herries," I said, "(if I call you rightly by that name,) let us speak upon this matter without the tone of mystery and fear in which you seem inclined to envelop it. I have been long, alas! deprived of the

care of that affectionate mother to whom you allude — long under the charge of strangers — and compelled to form my own resolutions upon the reasoning of my own mind. Misfortune — early deprivation — has given me the privilege of acting for myself; and constraint shall not deprive me of an Englishman's best privilege."

"The true cant of the day," said Herries, in a tone of scorn. "The privilege of free action belongs to no mortal — we are tied down by the fetters of duty — our mortal path is limited by the regulations of honour — our most indifferent actions are but meshes of the web of destiny by which we are all surrounded."

He paced the room rapidly, and proceeded in a tone of enthusiasm which, joined to some other parts of his conduct, seems to intimate an over-excited imagination, were it not contradicted by the general tenor of his speech and conduct.

"Nothing," he said, in an earnest yet melancholy voice — "nothing is the work of chance — nothing is the consequence of free-will — the liberty of which the Englishman boasts gives as little real freedom to its owner, as the despotism of an Eastern Sultan permits to his slave. The usurper, William of Nassau, went forth to hunt, and thought, doubtless, that it was by an act of his own royal pleasure that the horse of his murdered victim was prepared for his kingly sport. But Heaven had other views; and before the sun was high, a stumble of that very animal over an obstacle so inconsiderable as a mole-hillock, cost the haughty rider his life and his usurped crown. Do you think an inclination of the rein could have avoided that trifling impediment? I tell you, it crossed his way as inevitably as all the long chain of Caucasus could have done! Yes, young man, in doing and suffering, we play but the part allotted by Destiny; the manager of this strange drama, stand bound to act no more than is prescribed, to say no more than is set down for us; and yet, we mouth about free-will, and freedom of thought and action, as if Richard must not die, or Richmond conquer, exactly where the Author has decreed it shall be so!"

He continued to pace the room after this speech, with folded arms and downcast looks; and the sound of his steps and tone of his voice brought to my remembrance, that I had heard this singular person, when I met him on a former occasion, uttering such soliloquies in his solitary chamber. I observed that, like other Jacobites, in his inveteracy against the memory of King William, he had adopted the party opinion, that the monarch, on the day he had his fatal accident, rode upon a horse once the property of the unfortunate Sir John Friend, executed for High Treason in 1696.

It was not my business to aggravate, but, if possible, rather to soothe him in whose power I was so singularly placed. When I conceived that the keenness of his feelings had in some degree subsided, I answered him as follows: — "I will not — indeed I feel myself incompetent to argue a question of such metaphysical subtlety, as that which involves the limits betwixt free-will and predestination. Let us hope we may live honestly and die hopefully, without being obliged to form a decided opinion upon a point so far beyond our comprehension."

"Wisely resolved," he interrupted, with a sneer — "there came a note from some Geneva sermon."

"But," I proceeded, "I call your attention to the fact, that I, as well as you, am acted upon by impulses, the result either of my own free will, or the consequences of the part which is assigned to me by destiny. There may be — nay, at present they are — in direct contradiction to those by which you are actuated; and how shall we decide which shall have precedence? — You perhaps feel yourself destined to act as my jailer. I feel myself, on the contrary, destined to attempt and effect my escape. One of us must be wrong, but who can say which errs till the event has decided betwixt us?"

"I shall feel myself destined to have recourse to severe modes of restraint," said he, in the same tone of half jest, half earnest, which I had used.

"In that case," I answered, "it will be my destiny to attempt every thing for my freedom."

"And it may be mine, young man," he replied, in a deep and stern tone, "to take care that you should rather die than attain your purpose."

This was speaking out indeed, and I did not allow him to go unanswered. "You threaten me in vain," said I; "the laws of my country will protect me; or whom they cannot protect, they will avenge."

I spoke this firmly, and he seemed for a moment silenced; and the scorn with which he at last answered me, had something of affection in it.

"The laws!" he said; "and what, stripling, do you know of the laws of your country? — Could you learn jurisprudence under a base-born blotter of parchment, such as Saunders Fairford; or from the empty pedantic coxcomb, his son, who now, forsooth, writes himself advocate! — When Scotland was herself, and had her own king and Legislature, such plebeian cubes, instead of being called to the bar of her Supreme Courts, would scarce have been admitted to the honour of bearing a sheepskin process-bag."

Alan, I could not bear this, but answered indignantly, that he knew not the worth and honour from which he was detracting.

"I know as much of these Fairfords as I do of you," he replied.

"As much," said I, "and as little; for you can neither estimate their real worth nor mine. I know you saw them when last in Edinburgh."

"Ha!" he exclaimed, and turned on me an inquisitive look.

"It is true," said I; "you cannot deny it; and having thus shewn you that I know something of your motions, let me warn you I have modes of communication with which you are not acquainted. Oblige me not to use them to your prejudice."

"Prejudice me?" he replied. "Young man, I smile at, and forgive your folly. Nay, I will tell you that of which you are not aware, namely, that it was from letters received from these Fairfords that I first suspected, what the result of my visit to them confirmed, that you were the person whom I had sought for years."

"If you learned this," said I, "from the papers which were about my person on the night when I was under the necessity of becoming your guest at Brokenburn, I do not envy your indifference to the means of acquiring information. It was dishonourable to —"

"Peace, young man," said Herries, more calmly than I might have expected; "the worst dishonour must not be mentioned as in conjunction with my

name. Your pocket-book was in the pocket of your coat, and did not escape the curiosity of another, though it would have been sacred from mine. My servant, Cristal Nixon, brought me the intelligence after you were gone. I was displeased with the manner in which he had acquired his information; but it was not the less my duty to ascertain its truth, and for that purpose I went to Edinburgh. I was in hopes to persuade Mr Fairford to have entered into my views; but I found him too much prejudiced to permit me to trust him. He is a wretched, yet a timid slave of the present government, under which our unhappy country is dishonourably enthralled; and it would have been altogether unfit and unsafe to have intrusted him with the secret either of the right which I possess to direct your actions, or of the manner in which I purpose to exercise it."

I was determined to take advantage of his communicative humour, and obtain, if possible, more light upon his purpose. He seemed most accessible to being piqued on the point of honour, and I resolved to avail myself, but with caution, of his sensibility upon that topic. "You say," I replied, "that you are not friendly to indirect practices, and disapprove of the means by which your domestic obtained information of my name and quality—Is it honourable to avail yourself of that knowledge which is dishonourably obtained?"

"It is boldly asked," he replied; "but, within certain necessary limits, I dislike not boldness of expostulation. You have, in this short conference, displayed more character and energy than I was prepared to expect. You will, I trust, resemble a forest plant, which has indeed, by some accident, been brought up in the greenhouse, and thus rendered delicate and effeminate, but which regains its native firmness and tenacity, when exposed for a season to the winter air. I will answer your question plainly. In business, as in war, spies and informers are necessary evils, which all good men detest; but which yet all prudent men must use, unless they mean to fight and act blindfold. But nothing can justify the use of falsehood and treachery in our own person."

"You said to the elder Mr Fairford," continued I, with the same boldness, which I began to find was my best game, "that I was the son of Ralph Latimer of Langcote-Hall?—How do you reconcile this with your late assertion that my name is not Latimer?"

He coloured as he replied, "The dotting old fool lied; or perhaps mistook my meaning. I said, that gentleman might be your father. To say truth, I wished you to visit England, your native country; because, when you might do so, my rights over you would revive."

This speech fully led me to understand, a caution which had been often impressed upon me, that, if I regarded my safety, I should not cross the southern Border; and I cursed my own folly, which kept me fluttering like a moth around the candle, until I was betrayed into the calamity with which I had dallied. "What are those rights," I said, "which you claim over me?—To what end do you propose to exert them?"

"To a weighty one, you may be certain," answered Mr Herries; "but I do not, at present, mean to communicate to you either its nature or extent. You may judge of its importance, when,

in order entirely to possess myself of your person, I condescended to mix myself with the fellows who destroyed the fishing station of you wretched Quaker. That I held him in contempt, and was displeased at the greedy devices with which he ruined a manly sport, is true enough; but, unless as it favoured my designs on you, he might have, for me, maintained his stake-net-till Selway should cease to ebb and flow."

"Alas!" I said, "it doubles my regret to have been the unwilling cause of misfortune to an honest and friendly man."

"Do not grieve for that," said Herries; "honest Joshua is one of those who, by dint of long prayers, can possess themselves of widows' houses—he will quickly repair his losses. When he sustains any mishap, he and the other canters set it down as a debt against Heaven, and by way of set-off, practise rogueries without compunction, till they make the balance even, or incline it to the winning side. Enough of this for the present.—I must immediately shift my quarters; for, although I do not fear the over-zeal of Mr Justice Foxley or his clerk will lead them to any extreme measure, yet that mad scoundrel's unhappy recognition of me may make it more serious for them to connive at me, and I must not test their patience to a more severe trial. You must prepare to attend me, either as a captive or a companion; if as the latter, you must give your parole of honour to attempt no escape. Should you be so ill advised as to break your word once pledged, be assured that I will blow your brains out, without a moment's scruple."

"I am ignorant of your plans and purposes," I replied, "and cannot but hold them dangerous. I do not mean to aggravate my present situation by any unavailing resistance to the superior force which detains me; but I will not renounce the right of asserting my natural freedom should a favourable opportunity occur. I will, therefore, rather be your prisoner than your confederate."

"That is spoken fairly," he said; "and yet not without the canny caution of one brought up in the Gude Town of Edinburgh. On my part, I will impose no unnecessary hardship upon you; but, on the contrary, your journey shall be made as easy as is consistent with your being kept safely. Do you feel strong enough to ride on horseback as yet, or would you prefer a carriage? The former mode of travelling is best adapted to the country through which we are to travel, but you are at liberty to choose between them."

"I said, 'I felt my strength gradually returning, and that I should much prefer travelling on horseback. A carriage,' I added, 'is no choice—'"

"And so easily guarded," replied Herries, with a look as if he would have penetrated my very thoughts,— "that, doubtless, you think somewhat better calculated for an escape."

"My thoughts are my own," I answered; "and though you keep my person prisoner, there are beyond your control."

"Oh, I can read the book," he said, "without opening the leaves. But I would recommend to you to make no rash attempt, and it will be my care to see that you have no power to make any that is likely to be effectual. Listen, and all other necessities for one in your circumstances, are amply provided, Cristal Nixon will act as your valet,—I should rather, perhaps, say, your *femme de*

chambre. Your travelling dress you may perhaps consider as singular; but it is such as the circumstances require; and, if you object to, see the articles prepared for your use, your mode of journeying will be as personally unpleasant as that which conducted you hither — Adieu — We now know each other better than we did — it will not be my fault if the consequences of farther intimacy be not a more favourable mutual opinion."

He then left me, with a civil good night, to my own reflections, and only turned back to say, that we should proceed on our journey at daybreak next morning, at farthest; perhaps earlier, he said; but complimented me by supposing that, as I was a sportsman, I must always be ready for a sudden start.

We are then at issue, this singular man and myself. His personal views are to a certain point explained. He has chosen an antiquated and degenerate line of politics, and he claims, from some pretended tie of guardianship, or relationship, which he does not deign to explain, but which he seems to have been able to pass current on a silly Country Justice and his knavish clerk, a right to direct and to control my motions. The danger which awaited me in England, and which I might have escaped had I remained in Scotland, was doubtless occasioned by the authority of this man. But what my poor mother might fear for me as a child — what my English friend, Samuel Griffiths, endeavoured to guard against during my youth and noage, is now, it seems, come upon me; and, under a legal pretext, I am detained in what must be a most illegal manner, by a person, too, whose own political immunities have been forfeited by his conduct. It matters not — my mind is made up — neither persuasion nor threats shall force me into the desperate designs which this man meditates. Whether I am of the trifling consequence which my life hitherto seems to intimate, or whether I have (as would appear from my adversary's conduct) such importance, by birth or fortune, as may make me a desirable acquisition to a political faction, my resolution is taken in either case. Those who read this Journal, if it shall be perused by impartial eyes, shall judge of me truly; and if they consider me as a fool in encountering danger unnecessarily, they shall have no reason to believe me a coward or a turncoat, when I find myself engaged in it. I have been bred in sentiments of attachment to the family on the throne, and in these sentiments I will live and die. I have, indeed, some idea that Mr Herries has already discovered that I am made of different and more unamiable metal than he had at first believed. There were letters from my dear Alan Fairford, giving a ludicrous account of my instability of temper, in the same pocket-book, which, according to the admission of my pretended guardian, fell under the investigation of his domestic; during the night I passed at Brokenburn, where, as I now recollect, my wet clothes, with the contents of my pockets, were, with the thoughtlessness of a young traveller, committed too rashly to the care of a strange servant. And my kind friend and hospitable landlord, Mr Alexander Fairford, may also, and with justice, have spoken of my levities to this man. But he shall find he has made a false estimate upon these plausible grounds, since —

I must break off for the present.

CHAPTER IX.

LATIMER'S JOURNAL, IN CONTINUATION.

THERE is at length a halt — at length I have gained so much privacy as to enable me to continue my Journal. It has become a sort of task of duty to me, without the discharge of which I do not feel that the business of the day is performed. True no friendly eye may ever look upon these labours, which have amused the solitary hours of an unhappy prisoner. Yet, in the meanwhile, the exercise of the pen seems to act as a sedative upon my own agitated thoughts and tumultuous passions. I never lay it down but I rise stronger in resolution, more ardent in hope. A thousand vague fears, wild expectations, and indigested schemes, hurry through one's thoughts in seasons of doubt and of danger. But by arresting them as they flit across the mind, by throwing them on paper, and even by that mechanical act compelling ourselves to consider them with scrupulous and minute attention, we may perhaps escape becoming the dupes of our own excited imagination; just as a young horse is cured of the vice of starting, by being made to stand still and look for some time without any interruption at the cause of its terror.

There remains but one risk, which is that of discovery. But besides the small characters, in which my residence in Mr Fairford's house enabled me to excel, for the purpose of transferring as many scroth sheets as possible to a huge sheet of stamped paper, I have, as I have elsewhere intimated, had hitherto the comfortable reflection, that if the record of my misfortunes should fall into the hands of him by whom they are caused, they would, without harming any one, shew him the real character and disposition of the person who has become his prisoner — perhaps his victim. Now, however, that other names, and other characters, are to be mingled with the register of my own sentiments, I must take additional care of these papers, and keep them in such a manner that, in case of the least hazard of detection, I may be able to destroy them at a moment's notice. I shall not soon or easily forget the lesson I have been taught, by the prying disposition which Cristal Nixon, this man's agent and confederate, manifested at Brokenburn, and which proved the original cause of my sufferings.

My laying aside the last sheet of my Journal hastily, was occasioned by the unwonted sound of a violin, in the farm-yard beneath my windows. It will not appear surprising to those who have made music their study, that, after listening to a few notes, I became at once assured that the musician was no other than the itinerant, formerly mentioned as present at the destruction of Joshua Geddes's stake-hets, the superior delicacy and force of whose execution would enable me to swear to his bow amongst a whole orchestra. I had the less reason to doubt his identity, because he played twice over the beautiful Scottish air called *Wandering Willie*; and I could not help concluding that he did so for the purpose of intimating his own presence, since what the French called the *mus de guerre* of the performer was described by the tune.

Hope will catch at the most feeble twig for support in extremity. I knew this man, though deprived of sight, to be bold, ingenious, and perfectly capable

of acting as a guide. I believed I had won his goodwill, by having, in a frolic, assumed the character of his partner; and I remembered that, in a wild, wandering, and disorderly course of life, men, as they become loosened from the ordinary bonds of civil society, hold those of comradeship more closely sacred; so that honour is sometimes found among thieves, and faith and attachment in such as the law has termed vagrants. The history of Richard Coeur de Lion and his minstrel, Blondel, rushed, at the same time, on my mind, though I could not even then suppress a smile at the dignity of the example, when applied to a blind fiddler and myself. Still there was something in all this to awaken a hope, that if I could open a correspondence with this poor violer, he might be useful in extricating me from my present situation.

His profession furnished me with some hope that this desired communication might be attained; since it is well known that, in Scotland, where there is so much national music, the words and airs of which are generally known, there is a kind of free-masonry amongst performers, by which they can, by the mere choice of a tune, express a great deal to the hearers. Personal allusions are often made in this manner, with much point and pleasantness; and nothing is more usual at public festivals, than that the air played to accompany a particular health or toast, is made the vehicle of compliment, of wit, and sometimes of satire.

While these things passed through my mind rapidly, I heard my friend beneath recommence, for the third time, the air from which his own name had been probably adopted, when he was interrupted by his rustic auditors.

"If thou canst play no other spring but that, mon, ho hadst best put up ho's pipes and be jogging. Squire will be back anon, or Master Nixon, and we'll see who will pay poiper then."

Oh, thought I, if I have no sharper ears than those of my friends Jan and Dorcas to encounter, I may venture an experiment upon them; and, as most expressive of my state of captivity, I sung two or three lines of the 137th Psalm —

"By Babel's streams we sat and wept."

The country people listened with attention, and when it ceased, I heard them whisper together in tones of commiseration, "Laek-a-day, poor soul! so pretty a man to be beside his wits!"

"An he be that gae," said Wandering Willie, in a tone calculated to reach my ears, "I ken naething will raise his spirits like a spring." And he struck up, with great vigour and spirit, the lively Scottish air, the words of which instantly occurred to me, —

"Oh whistle and I'll come t' ye, my lad,
Oh whistle and I'll come t' ye, my lad;
Though father and mother and a' should gae mad,
Oh whistle and I'll come t' ye, my lad."

I soon heard a clattering noise of feet in the court-yard, which I concluded to be Jan and Dorcas dancing a jig in their Cumberland wooden clogs. Under cover of this din, I endeavoured to answer Willie's signal by whistling, as loud as I could,

"Come back again and see me
When a' the larks are gane."

Every one must remember instances of this festive custom, in which the adaptation of the tune to the toast was remarkably felicitous. Old Niel Gow, and his son Nathaniel, were peculiarly happy on such occasions.

He instantly threw the dancers out, by changing his air to

"There's my thumb, I'll ne'er beguile thee."

I no longer doubted that a communication between us was happily established, and that, if I had an opportunity of speaking to the poor musician, I should find him willing to take my letter to the post to invoke the assistance of some active magistrate, or of the commanding-officer of Castletown Castle, or, in short, to do whatever else I could point out, in the compass of his power, to contribute to my liberation. But to obtain speech of him, I must have run the risk of alarming the suspicions of Dorcas, if not of her yet more stupid Corydon. My ally's blindness prevented his receiving any communication by signs from the window — even if I could have ventured to make them, consistently with prudence — so that, notwithstanding the mode of intercourse we had adopted was both circuitous and peculiarly liable to misapprehension, I saw nothing I could do better than to continue it, trusting my own and my correspondent's acuteness, in applying to the airs the meaning they were intended to convey. I thought of singing the words themselves of some significant song, but feared I might, by doing so, attract suspicion. I endeavoured, therefore, to intimate my speedy departure from my present place of residence, by whistling the well-known air with which festive parties in Scotland usually conclude the dance. —

"Good-night and joy be wi' ye a',
For here nae langer maun I stay;
There's neither friend nor foe of mine
But wishes that I were away."

It appeared that Willie's powers of intelligence were much more active than mine, and that, like a deaf person, accustomed to be spoken to by signs, he comprehended, from the very first notes, the whole meaning I intended to convey; and he accompanied me in the air with his violin, in such a manner as at once to shew he understood my meaning, and to prevent my whistling from being attended to.

His reply was almost immediate, and was conveyed in the old martial air of "Hey, Johnnie lad, cock up your beaver." I ran over the words, and fixed on the following stanza, as most applicable to my circumstance: —

"Cock up your beaver, and cock it fir' spruith,
We'll over the Border and give them a brush;
There's somebody there we'll teach better behaviour —
Hey, Johnnie lad, cock up your beaver."

If these sounds alluded, as I hope they do, to the chance of assistance from my Scottish friends, I may indeed consider that a door is open to hope and freedom. I immediately replied with,

"My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands, a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe;
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go."

"Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North!
The birthplace of valour, the cradle of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love."

Willie instantly played, with a degree of spirit which might have awakened hope in Despair himself, if Despair could be supposed to understand Scotch Music, the fine old Jacobite air,

"For a' that, and a' that,
And twice as much as a' that."

I next endeavoured to intimate my wish to send notice of my condition to my friends; and, despairing to find an air sufficiently expressive of my purpose, I ventured to sing a verse, which, in various forms, occurs so frequently in old ballads—

"Where will I get a bonny boy
That will win love and shorn:
That will gas down to Duridar,
And bid my merry man come?"

He drowned the latter part of the verse by playing, with much emphasis,

"Kind Robin loss us."

Of this, though I ran over the verses of the song in my mind, I could make nothing; and before I could contrive any mode of intimating my uncertainty, a cry arose in the court-yard that Cristal Nixon was coming. My faithful Willie was obliged to retreat; but not before he had half played, half hummed by way of farewell,

"Leave thee—leave thee, lad—
I'll never leave thee;
The stars shall see withal
Ere I will leave thee."

I am thus, I think, secure of one trusty adherent in my misfortunes; and, however whimsical it may be to rely much on a man, of his idle profession, and deprived of sight withal, it is deeply impressed on my mind, that his services may be both useful and necessary. There is another quarter from which I look for succour, and which I have indicated to thee, Alan, in more than one passage of my Journal. Twice, at the early hour of daybreak, I have seen the individual alluded to in the court of the farm, and twice she made signs of recognition in answer to the gestures by which I endeavoured to make her comprehend my situation; but on both occasions she pressed her finger on her lips as expressive of silence and secrecy.

The manner in which G. M. entered upon the scene for the first time, seems to assure me of her good-will, so far as her power may reach; and I have many reasons to believe it is considerable. Yet she seemed hurried and frightened during the very transitory moments of our interview, and I think was, upon the last occasion, startled by the entrance of some one into the farm-yard, just as she was on the point of addressing me. You must not ask whether I am an early riser, since such subjects are only to be seen at daybreak; and although I have never again seen her, yet I have reason to think she is not distant. It was but three nights ago, that, worn out by the uniformity of my confinement, I had manifested more symptoms of despondence than I had before exhibited, which I conceive may have attracted the attention of the domestics, through whom the circumstance might transpire. On the next morning, the following lines lay on my table; but how conveyed there, I cannot tell. The hand in which they were written is a beautiful Italian manuscript:—

"As lords their labourers' hire delay,
Fate quits our toil with hopes to come,
Which, if far short of present pay,
Still owes a debt and names a man."

"Quit not the pledge, frail sufferer, thou,
Although a distant time be given;
Dearly it answers towards man,
And blasphemy to Heaven."

That these lines were written with the friendly purpose of inducing me to keep up my spirits, I

cannot doubt; and I trust the manner in which I shall conduct myself may shew that the pledge is accepted.

The dress is arrived in which it seems to be my self-elected guardian's pleasure that I shall travel; and what does it prove to be!—A skirt, or upper-petticoat of camel, like those worn by country ladies of moderate rank when on horseback, with such a riding-mask as they frequently use on journeys to preserve their eyes and complexion from the sun and dust, and sometimes, it is suspected, enable them to play off a little coquetry. From the gayer mode of employing the mask, however, I suspect I shall be precluded; for instead of being only pasteboard, covered with black velvet, I observe with anxiety that mine is thickened with a plate of steel, which, like Quixote's visor, serves to render it more strong and durable.

This apparatus, together with a steel clasp for securing the mask behind me with a padlock, gave me fearful recollections of the unfortunate being, who, never being permitted to lay aside such a visor, acquired the well-known historical epithet of the Man in the Iron Mask. I hesitated a moment whether I should so far submit to the acts of oppression designed against me as to assume this disguise, which was, of course, contrived to aid their purposes. But then I remembered Mr Herriess's threat, that I should be kept close prisoner in a carriage, unless I assumed the dress which should be appointed for me; and I considered the comparative degree of freedom which I might purchase by wearing the mask and female dress, as easily and advantageously purchased. Here, therefore, I must pause for the present, and await what the morning may bring forth.

[To carry on the story from the documents before us, we think it proper here to drop the Journal of the captive Darsie Latimer, and adopt, instead, a narrative of the proceedings of Alan Fairford in pursuit of his friend, which forms another series in this history.]

CHAPTER X.

NARRATIVE OF ALAN FAIRFORD.

THE reader ought, by this time, to have formed some idea of the character of Alan Fairford. He had a warmth of heart which the study of the law and of the world could not chill, and talents which they had rendered unusually acute. Deprived of the personal patronage enjoyed by most of his contemporaries, who assumed the gown under the protection of their aristocratic alliances and deacons, he early saw that he should have that to achieve for himself which fell to them as a right of birth. He laboured hard in silence and solitude, and his labours were crowned with success. But Alan doted on his friend Darsie, even more than he loved his profession, and, as we have seen, threw every thing aside when he thought Latimer in danger; forgetting fame and fortune, and hazarding even the serious displeasure of his father, to rescue him whom he loved with an elder brother's affection. Darsie,

though his parts were more quick and brilliant than those of his friend, seemed always to the latter a being under his peculiar charge, whom he was called upon to cherish and protect, in cases where the youth's own experience was unequal to the exigency; and now, when, the fate of Latimer seeming worse than doubtful, Alan's whole prudence and energy were to be exerted in his behalf, an adventure which might have seemed perilous to most youths of his age, had no terrors for him. He was well acquainted with the laws of his country, and knew how to appeal to them; and, besides his professional confidence, his natural disposition was steady, sedate, persevering, and undaunted. With these requisites he undertook a quest which, at that time, was not unattended with actual danger, and had much in it to appal a more timid disposition.

Fairford's first inquiry concerning his friend was of the chief magistrate of Dumfries, Provost Crosbie, who had seen the information of Darsie's disappearance. On his first application, he thought he discerned in the honest dignitary a desire to get rid of the subject. The Provost spoke of the riot at the fishing station as an "outbreak among those lawless wretches the fishermen, which concerned the Sheriff," he said, "more than us poor Town-Council bodies, that have enough to do to keep peace within burgh, amongst such a set of commissioners as the town are plagued with."

"But this is not all, Provost Crosbie," said Mr Alan Fairford; "a young gentleman of rank and fortune has disappeared amongst their hands—you know him. My father gave him a letter to you—Mr Darsie Latimer."

"Lack-a-day, yes! lack-a-day, yes!" said the Provost; "Mr Darsie Latimer—he dined at my house—I hope he is well!"

"I hope so too," said Alan, rather indignantly; "but I desire more certainty on that point. You yourself wrote my father that he had disappeared."

"Truth, yes, and that is true," said the Provost. "But did he not go back to his friends in Scotland? it was not natural to think he would stay here."

"Not unless he is under restraint," said Fairford, surprised at the coolness with which the Provost seemed to take up the matter.

"Rely on it, sir," said Mr Crosbie, "that if he has not returned to his friends in Scotland, he must have gone to his friends in England."

"I will rely on no such thing," said Alan; "if there is law or justice in Scotland, I will have the thing cleared to the very bottom."

"Reasonable, reasonable," said the Provost, "so far as is possible; but you know I have no power beyond the ports of the burgh."

"But you are in the commission besides, Mr Crosbie; a Justice of Peace for the county."

"True, very true—that is," said the cautious magistrate, "I will not say but my name may stand on the list, but I cannot remember that I have ever qualified."

"Why, in that case," said young Fairford, "there are ill-natured people might doubt your attachment to the Protestant line, Mr Crosbie."

"God forbid, Mr Fairford! I who have done and suffered in the forty-five! I reckon the Highland-men did me damage to the amount of £100 Scots,

forby all they ate and drank—no, no, sir, I stand beyond challenge; but as for plaguing myself with county business, let them that sought the mare shoe the mare. The Commissioners of Supply would see my back broken before they would help me in the burgh's work, and all the world knows the difference of the weight between public business in burgh and landward. What are their riots to me! I have we not riots enough of our own!—But I must be getting ready, for the council meets this forenoon. I am blithe to see your father's son on the canaway of our ancient burgh, Mr Alan Fairford. Were you a twelvemonth aulder, we would make a bursar of you, man. I hope you will come and dine with me before you go awy. What think you of to-day at two o'clock—just a roasted chucky and a drappit egg?"

Alan Fairford resolved that his friend's hospitality should not, as it seemed the inviter intended, put a stop to his queries. "I must delay you for a moment," he said, "Mr Crosbie; this is a serious affair; a young gentleman of high hopes, my own dearest friend, is missing—you cannot think it will be passed over slightly, if a man of your high character and known zeal for the government, do not make some active inquiry. Mr Crosbie, you are my father's friend, and I respect you as such—but to others it will have a bad appearance."

The withers of the Provost were not unwrang; he paced the room in much tribulation, repeating, "But what can I do, Mr Fairford! I warrant your friend casts up again—he will come back again, like the ill shilling—he is not the sort of gear that tynes—a hellicent boy, running through the country with a blind fiddler, and playing the fiddle to a parcel of blackguards, who can tell where the like of him may have scampered to!"

"There are persons apprehended, and in the jail of the town, as I understand from the Sheriff-Substitute," said Mr Fairford; "you must call them before you, and inquire what they know of this young gentleman."

"Ay, ay—the Sheriff-Depute did commit some poor creatures, I believe—wretches, ignorant fishermen bodies, that had been quarrelling with Quaker Geddes and his stake-net, whilk, under favour of your gown he it spoken, Mr Fairford, are not over and above lawful, and the Town-Clerk thinks that they may be lawfully removed *ex facto*—but that is by the by. But, sir, the creatures were a' dismissed for want of evidence; the Quaker would not swear to them, and what could the Sheriff and me do but just let them loose! Come awa, cheer up, Master Alan, and take a walk till dinner-time—I must really go to the council."

"Stop a moment, Provost," said Alan; "I lodge a complaint before you as a magistrate, and you will find it serious to slight it over. You must have these men apprehended again."

"Ay, ay—easy said; but catch them that can," answered the Provost; "they are over the March by this time, or by the point of Cairn.—Lord help ye! they are a kind of amphibious deavies, neither land nor water boats—neither English nor Scots—neither county nor stewarty, as we say—they are dispersed like so much quinsilver. You may as well try to whistle a smug out of the Solway, as to get hold of one of them till all the fray is over."

"Mr Crosbie, this will not do," answered the

young counsellor; "there is a person of more importance than such wretches as you describe concerned in this unhappy business—I must name to you a certain Mr Herries."

He kept his eye on the Provost as he uttered the name, which he did rather at a venture, and from the connection which that gentleman, and his real or supposed niece, seemed to have with the fat of Darrie Latimer, than from any distinct cause of suspicion which he entertained. He thought the Provost seemed embarrassed, though he shewed much desire to assume an appearance of indifference, in which he partly succeeded.

"Herries!" he said—"What Herries?—There are many of that name—not so many as formerly, for the old stocks are wearing out; but there is Herries of Heathgill, and Herries of Auchintulloch, and Herries—"

"To save you farther trouble, this person's designation is Herries of Birrenswork."

"Of Birrenswork!" said Mr Crosbie; "I have you now, Mr Alan. Could you not as well have said, the Laird of Redgauntlet?"

Fairford was too wary to testify any surprise at this identification of names, however unexpected. "I thought," said he, "he was more generally known by the name of Herries. I have seen and been in company with him under that name, & am sure."

"Oh ay; in Edinburgh, belike. You know Redgauntlet was unfortunate a great while ago, and though he was maybe not deeper in the mire than other folk, yet, for some reason or other, he did not get so easily out."

"He was attainted, I understand; and has no remission," said Fairford.

The cautious Provost only nodded, and said, "You may guess, therefore, why it is so convenient he should hold his mother's name, which is also partly his own, when he is about Edinburgh. To bear his proper name might be accounted a kind of flying in the face of government, ye understand. But he has been long connived at—the story is an old story—and the gentleman has many excellent qualities, and is of a very ancient and honourable house—has cousins among the great folk—counts kin with the Advocate and with the Sheriff—hark ye, you know, Mr Alan, will not pike out hawks' een—he is widely connected—my wife is a fourth cousin of Redgauntlet's."

Hinc illa lachryma! thought Alan Fairford to himself; but the hint presently determined him to proceed by soft means and with caution. "I beg you to understand," said Fairford, "that in the investigation I am about to make, I design no harm to Mr Herries, or Redgauntlet—call him what you will. All I wish is, to ascertain the safety of my friend. I know that he was rather foolish in once going upon a mere frolic, in disguise, to the neighbourhood of this same gentleman's house. In his circumstances, Mr Redgauntlet may have misinterpreted the motives, and considered Darrie Latimer as a spy. His influence, I believe, is great, among the disorderly people you spoke of but now!"

The Provost answered with another sagacious shake of his head, that would have done honour to Lord Bursleigh in the Critic.

"Well, then," continued Fairford, "is it not possible that, in the mistaken belief that Mr Latimer

was a spy, he may, upon such suspicion, have caused him to be carried off and confined somewhere?—Such things are done at elections, and on occasions less pressing than when men think their lives are in danger from an informer."

"Mr Fairford," said the Provost, very earnestly, "I scarce think such a mistake possible: or if, by any extraordinary chance, it should have taken place, Redgauntlet, whom I cannot but know well, being, as I have said, my wife's first cousin, (fourth cousin, I should say,) is altogether incapable of doing any thing harsh to the young gentleman—he might send him over to Ailsay for a night or two, or maybe land him on the north coast of Ireland, or in Islay, or some of the Hebrides; but depend upon it, he is incapable of harming a hair of his head."

"I am determined not to trust to that, Provost," answered Fairford, firmly; "and I am a good deal surprised at your way of talking so lightly of such an aggression on the liberty of the subject. You are to consider, and Mr Herries, or Mr Redgauntlet's friends would do very well also to consider, how it will sound in the ears of an English Secretary of State, that an attainted traitor (for such is this gentleman) has not only ventured to take up his abode in this realm—against the King of which he has been in arms—but is suspected of having proceeded, by open force and violence, against the person of one of the lieges, a young man, who is neither without friends nor property to secure his being righted."

The Provost looked at the young counsellor with a face in which distrust, alarm, and vexation seemed mingled. "A fashious job," he said at last, "a fashious job; and it will be dangerous meddling with it. I should like ill to see your father's son turn informer against an unfortunate gentleman."

"Neither do I mean it," answered Alan, "provided that unfortunate gentleman and his friends give me a quiet opportunity of securing my friend's safety. If I could speak with Mr Redgauntlet, and hear his own explanation, I should probably be satisfied. If I am forced to denounce him to government, it will be in his new capacity of a kidnapper. I may not be able, nor is it my business, to prevent his being recognized in his former character of an attainted person, excepted from the general pardon."

"Master Fairford," said the Provost, "would ye ruin the poor innocent gentleman on an idle suspicion?"

"Say no more of it, Mr Crosbie; my line of conduct is determined—unless that suspicion is removed."

"Well, sir," said the Provost, "since so it be, and since you say that you do not seek to harm Redgauntlet personally, I'll ask a man to dine with us to-day that knows as much about his matters as most folk. You must think, Mr Alan Fairford, though Redgauntlet be my wife's near relative, and though, doubtless, I wish him well, yet I am not the person who is like to be intrusted with his incomings and outgoings. I am not a man for that—I keep the kirk, and I abhor Popery—I have stood up for the House of Hanover, and for liberty and property—I carried arms, sir, against the Pretender, when three of the Highlanders's baggage-carts were stopped at Eccleochan; and I had an especial loss of a hundred pounds—"

"Scots," interrupted Fairford. "You forget you told me all this before."

"Scots or English, it was too much for me to lose," said the Provost; "so you see I am not a person to pack or peel with Jacobites, and such unfreemen as poor Redgauntlet."

"Granted, granted, Mr Croobie; and what then?" said Alan Fairford.

"Why, then, it follows, that if I am to help you at this pinch, it cannot be by and through my ain personal knowledge, but through some fitting agent or third person."

"Granted again," said Fairford. "And pray who may this third person be?"

"Wha but Pate Maxwell of Sammartrees—him they call Pate-in-Peril!"

"An old forty-five man, of course!" said Fairford.

"Ye may swear that," replied the Provost—"as black a Jacobite as the auld heaven can make him; but a sonsy, merry companion, that none of us think it worth while to break wi' for all his brags and his clavers. You would have thought, if he had had but his own way at Derby, he would have marched Charlie Stewart through between Wade and the Duke, as a thread goes through the needle's ee, and seated him in Saint James's before you could have said haud your hand. But though he is a windy body when he gets on his auld-world stories, he has mair gumption in him than most people—knows business, Mr Alan, being bred to the law; but never took the gown, because of the oaths, which kept more folk-out than than they do now—the more's the pity."

"What! are you sorry, Provost, that Jacobitism is upon the decline?" said Fairford.

"No, no," answered the Provost—"I am only sorry for folks losing the tenderness of conscience which they used to have. I have a son breeding to the bar, Mr Fairford; and, no doubt, considering my services and sufferings, I might have looked for some bit postie to him; but if the muckle tikes come in—I mean a' these Maxwells, and Johnstones, and great lairds, that the oaths used to keep out lang syne—the bits o' meenan degies, like my son, and maybe like your father's son, Mr Alan, will be sair put to the wall."

"But to return to the subject, Mr Croobie," said Fairford, "do you really think it likely that this Mr Maxwell will be of service in this matter?"

"It's very like he may be, for he is the tongue of the trumpet to the whole squad of them," said the Provost; "and Redgauntlet, though he will not stick at times to call him a fool, takes more of his counsel than any man's else that I am aware of. If Pate can bring him to a communion, the business is done. He's a sharp chield, Pate-in-Peril."

"Pate-in-Peril!" repeated Alan; "a very singular name."

"Ay, and it was in as queer a way he got it; but I'll say naething about that," said the Provost, "for fear of forestalling his market; for ye're sure to hear it once at least, however oftener, before the punch-bowl gives place to the tea-pot. And now, fare ye weel; for there is the coach-bell clinking in earnest; and if I am not there before it jows in, Baulie Lumsie will be trying scope of his manes."

The Provost, resenting his expectation of seeing Mr Fairford at two o'clock, at length effected his

escape from the young councillor, and left him at a considerable loss how to proceed. The Sheriff, it seems, had returned to Edinburgh, and he feared to find the visible repugnance of the Provost to interfere with this Laird of Birnamwood, or Redgauntlet, much stronger amongst the country gentlemen, many of whom were Catholics as well as Jacobites, and most others unwilling to quarrel with kinsmen and friends, by prosecuting with severity political offences which had almost run a prescription.

To collect all the information in his power, and not to have recourse to the higher authorities until he could give all the light of which the case was capable, seemed the wiser proceeding in a choice of difficulties. He had some conversation with the Procurator-Fiscal, who, as well as the Provost, was an old correspondent of his father. Alan expressed to that officer a purpose of visiting Brokenburn, but was assured by him, that it would be a step attended with much danger to his own person, and altogether fruitless; that the individuals who had been ringleaders in the riot were long since safely sheltered in their various lurking-holes in the Isle of Man, Cumberland, and elsewhere; and that those who might remain would undoubtedly commit violence on any who visited their settlement with the purpose of inquiring into the late disturbances.

There were not the same objections to his hastening to Mount Sharon, where he expected to find the latest news of his friend; and there was time enough to do so, before the hour appointed for the Provost's dinner. Upon the road, he congratulated himself on having obtained one point of almost certain information. The person who had in a manner forced himself upon his father's hospitality, and had appeared desirous to induce Darsie Latimer to visit England, against whom, too, a sort of warning had been received from an individual connected with and residing in his own family, proved to be a promoter of the disturbance in which Darsie had disappeared.

What could be the cause of such an attempt on the liberty of an inoffensive and amiable man? It was impossible it could be merely owing to Redgauntlet's mistaking Darsie for a spy; for that was that was the solution which Fairford had offered the Provost, he well knew that, in point of fact, he himself had been warned by his singular visitor of some danger to which his friend was exposed, before such suspicion could have been entertained; and the injunctions received by Latimer from his guardian, or him who acted as such, Mr Griffiths of London, pointed to the same thing. He was rather glad, however, that he had not let Provost Croobie into his secret, rather than was absolutely necessary; since it was plain that the connection of his wife with the suspected party was likely to affect his impartiality as a magistrate.

When Alan Fairford arrived at Mount Sharon, Rachel Geddes hastened to meet him, almost before the servant could open the door. She drew back in disappointment when she beheld a stranger, and said, to excuse her precipitation, that "she had thought it was her brother Joshua returned from Cumberland."

"Mr Geddes is then absent from home?" said Fairford, much disappointed in his turn.

"He hath been gone since yesterday, friend," answered Rachel, once more composed to her

quietude which characterizes her sect, but her pale cheek and red eye giving contradiction to her assumed equanimity.

"I am," said Fairford, hastily, "the particular friend of a young man not unknown to you, Miss Geddes—the friend of Darsie Latimer—and am come hither in the utmost anxiety, having understood from Provost Crosbie, that he had disappeared in the night when a destructive attack was made upon the fishing-station of Mr Geddes."

"Thou dost afflict me, friend, by thy inquiries," said Rachel, more affected than before; "for although the youth was like those of the worldly generation, wise in his own conceit, and lightly to be moved by the breath of vanity, yet Joshua loved him, and his heart clave to him as if he had been his own son. And when he himself escaped, from the sons of Belial, which was not until they had tired themselves with reviling, and with idle reproach, and the jests of the scoffer, Joshua, my brother, returned to them once and again, to give ransom for the youth called Darsie Latimer, with offers of money and with promise of remission, but they would not hearken to him. Also, he went before the Head Judge, whom men call the Sheriff, and would have told him of the youth's peril; but he would in no way hearken to him unless he would swear unto the truth of his words, which thing he might not do without sin, seeing it is written, Swear not at all—also, that our conversation shall be yea of nay. Therefore, Joshua returned to me disconsolate, and said, 'Sister Rachel, this youth hath run into peril for my sake; assuredly I shall not be guiltless if a hair of his head be harmed, seeing I have sinned in permitting him to go with me to the fishing-station when such evil was to be feared. Therefore, I will take my horse, even Solomon, and ride swiftly into Cumberland, and I will make myself friends with Mammon of Unrighteousness, among the magistrates of the Gentiles, and among their mighty men; and it shall come to pass that Darsie Latimer shall be delivered, even if it were at the expense of half my substance.' And I said, 'Nay, my brother, go not, for they will but scoff at and revile thee; but hire with thy silver one of the scribes, who are eager as hunters in pursuing their prey, and he shall free Darsie Latimer from the men of violence by his cunning, and thy soul shall be guiltless of evil towards the lad.' But he answered and said, 'I will not be controlled in this matter.' And he is gone forth, and hath not returned, and I fear me that he may never return; for though he be peaceful, as becometh one who holds all violence as offence against his own soul, yet neither the floods of water, nor the fear of the snare, nor the drawn sword of the adversary brandished in the path, will overcome his purpose. Wherefore the Saviour may swallow him up, or the sword of the enemy may devour him—nevertheless, my hope is better in Him who directeth all things, and ruleth over the waves of the sea, and overruleth the devices of the wicked, and who can redeem us even as a bird from the fowler's net."

This was all that Fairford could learn from Miss Geddes; but he heard with pleasure, that the good Quaker, her brother, had many friends among those of this own profession in Cumberland, and without exposing himself to so much danger as his sister seemed to apprehend, he trusted he might be able to discover some traces of Darsie Latimer.

He himself rode back to Dumfries, having left with Miss Geddes his direction in that place, and an earnest request that she would forward thither whatever information she might obtain from her brother.

After Fairford's return to Dumfries, he employed the brief interval which remained before dinner, in writing an account of what had befallen Latimer, and of the present uncertainty of his condition, to Mr Samuel Griffiths, through whose hands the remittances for his friend's service had been regularly made, desiring he would instantly acquaint him with such parts of his history as might direct him in the search which he was about to institute through the border counties, and which he pledged himself not to give up until he had obtained news of his friend, alive or dead. The young lawyer's mind felt easier when he had despatched this letter. He could not conceive any reason why his friend's life should be aimed at; he knew Darsie had done nothing by which his liberty could be legally affected; and although, even of late years, there had been singular histories of men, and women also, who had been trepanned, and concealed in solitudes and distant islands, in order to serve some temporary purpose, such violence had been chiefly practised by the rich on the poor, and by the strong on the feeble; whereas, in the present case, this Mr Herries, or Redgauntlet, being amenable, for more reasons than one, to the censure of the law, must be the weakest in any struggle in which it could be appealed to. It is true, that his friendly anxiety whispered, that the very cause which rendered this oppressor less formidable, might make him more desperate. Still, recalling his language, so strikingly that of the gentleman, and even of the man of honour, Alan Fairford concluded, that though, in his feudal pride, Redgauntlet might venture on the deeds of violence exercised by the aristocracy in other times, he could not be capable of any action of deliberate atrocity. And in these convictions he went to dine with Provost Crosbie, with a heart more at ease than might have been expected.

CHAPTER XI.

NARRATIVE OF ALAN FAIRFORD, CONTINUED.

FIVE minutes had elapsed, after the town-clock struck two, before Alan Fairford, who had made a small detour to put his letter into the post-house, reached the mansion of Mr Provost Crosbie, and was at once greeted by the voice of that civic dignitary, and the rural dignitary his visitor, as by the voices of men impatient for their dinner.

"Come away, Mr Fairford—the Edinburgh time is later than ours," said the Provost.

And, "Come away, young gentleman," said the Laird; "I remember your father well, at the Cross, thirty years ago—I reckon you are quite late in Edinburgh as at London, four o'clock hours—oh!"

"Not quite so degenerate," replied Fairford; "but certainly many Edinburgh people are so ill-advised as to postpone their dinner till three, that they may have full time to answer their London correspondents."

"London correspondents!" said Mr Maxwell; "and pray, what the devil have the people of Auld Reekie to do with London correspondents?"

"The tradesmen must have their goods," said Fairford.

"Can they not buy our own Scottish manufactures, and pick their customers' pockets in a more patriotic manner?"

"Then the ladies must have fashions," said Fairford.

"Can they not break the plaid over their heads, as their mothers did! A tartan screen, and once a-year a new cockerony from Paris, should serve a Countess." But ye have not many of these left, I think—Marschal, Airley, Winton, Wemyss, Balmerino, all passed and gone—ay, ay, the countesses and ladies of quality will scarce take up too much of your ball-room floor with their quality hoggs now-a-days."

"There is no want of crowding, however, sir," said Fairford; "they begin to talk of a new Assembly-Room."

"A new Assembly-Room!" said the old Jacobite Laird—"Umph—I mind quartering three hundred men in the old Assembly-Room"—But gonny? come—I'll ask no more questions—the answers all smell of new lands new lands, add do but spoil my appetite, which were a pity, since here comes Mrs Crosbie to say our mutton's ready."

It was even so. Mrs Crosbie had been absent, like Eve, "on hospitable cares intent," a duty which she did not conceive herself exempted from, either by the dignity of her husband's rank in the nobility, or the splendour of her Brussels silk gown, or even by the more highly prized lustre of her birth; for she was born a Maxwell, and allied, as her husband often informed his friends, to several of the first families in the county. She had been handsome, and was still a pretty, good-looking woman of her years; and though her peep into the kitchen had somewhat brightened her complexion, it was no more than a modest touch of rouge might have done.

The Provost was certainly proud of his lady, nay, some said he was afraid of her; for, of the females of the Redgauntlet family there went a rumour, that, ally where they would, there was a gray mare as surely in the stables of their husbands, as there is a white horse in Wouverman's picture. The good dame, too, was supposed to have brought a spice of politics into Mr Crosbie's household along with her; and the Provost's enemies at the Council-table of the burgh used to observe, that he uttered there many a bold harangue against the Pretender, and in favour of King George and government, of which he dared not have pronounced a syllable in his own bedchamber; and that, in fact, his wife's predominating influence had now and then occasioned his acting, or forbearing to act, in a manner very different from his general professions of zeal for Revolution principles. If this was in any respect true, it was certainly, on the other hand, that Mrs Crosbie, in all paternal points, seemed to ac-

knowledge the "lawful way and right supremacy" of the head of the house, and if she did not in truth reverence her husband, she at least seemed to do so.

This stately dame received Mr Maxwell (a cousin of course) with cordiality, and Fairford with civility; answering at the same time with respect, to the magisterial complaints of the Provost, that dinner was just coming up. "But since you changed poor Peter MacAlpin, that used to take care of the town-clock, my dear, it has never gone well a single day."

"Peter MacAlpin, my dear," said the Provost, "made himself too busy for a person in office, and drunk healths and so forth, which it became no man to drink or to pledge, far less one that is in point of office a servant of the public. I understand that he lost the music-halls in Edinburgh, for playing 'Owee the Water to Charlie,' upon the death of James. He is a black sheep, and deserves no encouragement."

"Not a bad tune though, after all," said Summertrees; and, turning to the window, he half hummed, half whistled, the air in question, then sang the last verse aloud:

"Oh I loe weel my Charlie's name,
Though some there be that shun him;
But oh to see the dail gang hame,
Wi' a' the Whigs before him!
Over the water, and over the sea,
And over the water to Charlie;
Come weel, come weel, we'll gallow and go,
And live or die wi' Charlie."

Mrs Crosbie smiled furtively on the Laird, wearing an aspect at the same time of deep submission; while the Provost, not choosing to hear his visitor's ditty, took station through the room, in unquestioned dignity and independence of authority.

"Aweel, aweel, my dear," said the lady, with a quiet smile of submission, "ye ken these matters best, and you will do your pleasure—they are far above my hand—only, I doubt if ever the town-clock will go right, or your meals be got up as regular as I should wish, till Peter MacAlpin gets his office back again." The body said, and can neither work nor want, but he is the only hand to set a clock."

It may be noticed in passing, that, notwithstanding this prediction, which, probably, the fair Cassandra had the full means of accomplishing, it was not till the second council-day thereafter that the misdemeanours of the Jacobite clock-keeper were passed over, and he was once more restored to his occupation of fixing the town's time, and the Provost's dinner-hour.

Upon the present occasion the dinner passed pleasantly away. Summertrees talked and jested with the easy indifference of a man who holds himself superior to his company. He was indeed an important person, as was testified by his portly appearance; his hat lined with *point d'Espagne*; his coat and waistcoat once richly embroidered, though now almost threadbare; the splendour of his solitaire, and laced ruffles, though the first was sorely creased, and the other sullied; not to forget the length of his silver-tipped rapier. His wit, or rather humour, bordered on the sarcastic, and indicated a discontented man; and although he showed no displeasure when the Provost attempted a repartee, yet it seemed that he permitted it upon mere suzerainty, as a fencing-master, engaged with a pupil, will sometimes permit the tyro to hit him,

1 Not much to this day, for within my recollection the London post was brought partly in a small mail-cart; and men are yet alive who recalled when it came along with only one single letter for Edinburgh, addressed to the manager of the British Library Company.

2 I remember that this identical answer given by an old Highland gentleman of the Forty-Five, when he heard of the opening of the New Assembly-Room in George Street.

solely by way of encouragement. The Laird's own jests, in the meanwhile, were eminently successful, not only with the Provost and his lady, but with the red-cheeked and red-ribboned servant-maid who waited at table, and who could scarce perform her duty with propriety, so effectual were the explosions of Summertrees. Alan Fairford alone was unmoved among all this mirth; which was the less wonderful, that, besides the important subject which occupied his thoughts, most of the Laird's good things consisted in allusions to little parochial or family incidents, with which the Edinburgh visitor was totally unacquainted; so that the laughter of the party sounded in his ear like the idle creaking of thorns under the pot, with this difference, that they did not accompany or second any such useful operation as the boiling thereof.

Fairford was glad when the cloth was withdrawn; and when Provost Crosbie (not without some points of advice from his lady, touching the precise mixture of the ingredients) had accomplished the compounding of a noble bowl of punch, at which the old Jacobite's eyes seemed to glisten, the glasses were pushed round it, filled, and withdrawn each by its owner, when the Provost emphatically named the toast, "The King," with an important look to Fairford, which seemed to say, "You can have no doubt whom I mean, and therefore there is no occasion to particularize the individual."

Summertrees repeated the toast, with a sly wink to the lady, while Fairford drank his glass in silence.

"Well, young advocate," said the landed proprietor, "I am glad to see there is some shame, if there is little honesty, left in the Faculty. Some of your black-gowns, now-a-days, have as little of the one as of the other."

"At least, sir," replied Mr Fairford, "I am so much of a lawyer as not willingly to enter into disputes which I am not retained to support — it would be but throwing away both time and argument."

"Come, confy," said the lady, "we will have no argument in this house about Whig or Tory — the Provost knows what he means *say*, and I ken what he should think; and for a that has come and gone yet, there may be a time coming when honest men may say what they think, whether they be Provosts or not."

"D'ye hear that, Provost?" said Summertrees; "your wife's a witch, man; you should nail a horse shoe on your chamber door — Ha, ha, ha!"

This sally did not take quite so well as former efforts of the Laird's wit. The lady drew up, and the Provost said, half aside, "The south board is unsebound." You will find the horse shoe hissing hot, Summertrees.

"You can speak from experience, doubtless, Provost," answered the Laird; "but I crave pardon — I need not tell Mrs Crosbie that I have all respect for the mild and honourable house of Redgauntlet."

"And good reason ye have, that are we aibl to them," quoth the lady, "and kend weel halth them that are here, and them that are gane."

"In troth, and ye may say soe, madam," answered the Laird; "for poor Harry Redgauntlet, that suffered at Carlisle, was hand and glove with me; and yet we parted on short leave-taking."

1 The true joke is no joke.

"Ay Summertrees," said the Provost; "that was when you played Cheat-the-woodie, and got the by-name of Pate-in-Peril. I wish you would tell the story to my young friend here. He likes weel to hear of a sharp trick, as most lawyers do."

"I wonder at your want of circumspection, Provost," said the Laird, — much after the manner of a singer when declining to sing the song that is quivering upon his tongue's very end. "Ye should mind there are some auld stories that cannot be ripped up again with entire safety to all concerned. *Tace* is Latin for a candle."

"I hope," said the lady, you are not afraid of any thing being said out of this house to your prejudice, Summertrees? I have heard the story before; but the oftener I hear it, the more wonderful I think it."

"Yes, madam; but it has been now a wonder of more than nine-days, and it is time it should be ended," answered Maxwell.

Fairford now thought it civil to say, "that he had often heard of Mr Maxwell's wonderful escape, and that nothing could be more agreeable to him than to hear the right version of it."

But Summertrees was obdurate, and refused to take up the time of the company with such "auld wad nonsense."

"Weel, weel," said the Provost, "a wilful man mannae his way. What do your folk in the country think about the disturbances that are beginning to spunk out in the colonies?"

"Excellent, sir, excellent. When things come to the worst they will mend; and to the worst they are coming. But as to that nonsense play of mine, if ye insist on hearing the particulars," — said the Laird, who began to be sensible that the period of telling his story gracefully was gliding fast away.

"Nay," said the Provost, "it was not for myself, but this young gentleman."

"Aweel, what for should I not pleasure the young gentleman? — I'll just drink to honest folk at home and abroad, and dell ane else. And then — but you have heard it before, Mrs Crosbie?"

"Not so often as to think it tiresome, I assure ye," said the lady; and without farther preliminaries, the Laird addressed Alan Fairford.

"Ye have heard of a year they call the *forty-five*, young gentleman; when the Southrons' hands made their last acquaintance with Scottish claymores? There was a set of rampaging chieftains in the country then that they called rebels — I never could find out what for — Some men should have been wi' them that never came, Provost — Skye and the Bush aboon Trarua for that, ye ken — Weel, the job was settled at last. Cloured crowns were plenty, and raxed necks came into fashion. I dinna mind very weel what I was doing, swaggering about the country with dirk and pistol at my belt for five or six months, or thereaway; but I had a weary waking out of a wild dream. Then did I find myself on foot in a misty morning, with my hand, just for fear of going astray, linked into a hand-cuff, as they call it, with poor Harry Redgauntlet's fastened into the other; and there we were, trudging along, with about a score more that had thrust their horses over deep in the bog, just like ourselves, and a (my name's) guard of redcoats, with two file of dragons, to keep all quiet, and give us heart to the road. Now, in this mode of travelling was not very pleasant, the object did not particularly

recommend it; for, you understand, young man, that they did not trust these poor rebel bodies to be tried by jurists of their ain kindly countrymen, though one would have thought they would have found Whigs enough in Scotland to hang us all; but they behaved to trounce us away to be tried at Carlisle, where the folk had been so frightened, that had you brought a whole Highland clan at once into the court, they would have put their hands upon their een, and cried, 'hang them a', just to be quit of them."

"Ay, ay," said the Provost, "that was a snell law, I grant ye."

"Suell!" said the wife, "suell! I wish they that passed it had the jury I would recommend them to!"

"I suppose the young lawyer thinks it all very right," said Summertrees, looking at Fairford—"an old lawyer might have thought otherwise. However, the cudgel was to be found to beat the dog, and they chose a heavy one. Well, I kept my spirits better than my companion, poor fellow; for I had the luck to have neither wife nor child to think about, and Harry Redgauntlet had both one and t'other.—You have seen Harry, Mrs. Crosbie?"

"In troth have I," said she, with the sigh which we give to early recollections, of which the object is no more. "He was not so tall as his brother, and a gentler lad every way. After he married the great English fortune, folk called him less of a Scottishman than Edward."

"Folk lee'd, then," said Summertrees; "poor Harry was none of your bold-speaking, ranting ravers, that talk about what they did yesterday, or what they will do to-morrow; it was when something was to do at the moment that you should have looked at Harry Redgauntlet. I saw him at Culloden, when all was lost, doing more than twenty of these bleezing braggarts, till the very soldiers that took him, cried not to hurt him—for all some-body's orders, Provost—forehe was the bravest fellow of them all. Well, as I went by the side of Harry, and felt him raise my hand up in the mist of the morning, as if he wished to wipe his eye,—for he had not that freedom without my leave—my very heart was like to break for him, poor fellow. In the meanwhile, I had been trying and trying to make my hand as fine as a lady's, to see if I could slip it out of my iron wringhand. You may think," he said, laying his broad bony hand on the table, "I had work enough with such a shoulder-of-mutton fist; but if you observe, the shackle-bones are of the largest, and so they were obliged to keep the bandous wide; at length I got my hand slipped out, and slipped in again; and poor Harry was as deep in his ain thoughts, I could not make him sensible what I was doing."

"Why not?" said Alan Fairford, for whom the tale began to have some interest.

"Because there was an unchancy beast of a dragon riding close beside us on the other side; and if I had let him into my confidence as well as Harry, it would not have been long before a pistol-ball slapped through my bonnet.—Well, I had little for it but to do the best I could for myself; and, by my conscience, 'twas fine, when the gallows was staring me in the face. We went to halt for breakfast at Moffat. Well did I know the moors; we were marching over, having hunted and hawked

on every acre of ground in very different times. So I waited, you see, till I was on the edge of Erriksdale brae.—Ye ken the place they call the Marquis's Beef-stand, because the Annandale loons used to put their stolen cattle in there?"

Fairford intimated his ignorance.

"Ye must have seen it as ye came this way; it looks as if four hills were laying their heads together, to shut out daylight from the dark hollow space between them. A d—d deep, black, black-guard-looking abyss of a hole it is, and goes straight down from the road-side, as perpendicular as it can do, to be a heathery brae. At the bottom, there is a small bit of a brook, that you would think could hardly find its way out from the dells that are so closely jammed round it."

"A had pass, indeed," said Alan.

"You may say that," continued the Laird. "Bad as it was, sir, it was my only chance; and though my very flesh crept when I thought what a rumble I was going to get, yet I kept my heart up all the same. And so, just when we came on the edge of this Beef-stand of the Johnstones, I slipped out my hand from the handcuff, cried to Harry Gauntlet, 'Follow me!'—whisked under the belly of the dragon horse—flung my plaid round me with the speed of lightning—threw myself on my side, for there was no keeping my feet, and down the brae hurried I, over heather and fern, and blackberries, like a rover down Chalmers's Close, in Auld Reekie. Go, sir, I never could help laughing when I think how the goundrel red-coats must have been bumbazed; for the mist being, as I said, thick, they had little notion, I take it, that they were on the verge of such a dilemma. I was half-way down—for rowing is faster work than running—ere they could get at their arms; and then it was flash, flash, flash—rap, rap, rap—from the edge of the road; but my head was too jumbled to think any thing either of that or the hard knocks I got among the stones. I kept my senses together, which has been thought wonderful by all that ever saw the place; and I helped myself with my hands as gallantly as I could, and to the bottom I came. There I lay for half a moment; but the thoughts of a gallows is worth all the salts and scent-bottles in the world, for bringing a man to himself. Up I sprung, like a four-year-old colt. All the hills were spinning round with me, like so many great big humming-tops. But there was nae time to think of that neither; more especially as the mist had risen a little with the firing. I could see the villains, like sae many craws on the edge of the brae; and I reckoned that they saw me; for some of the loons were beginning to crawl down the hill, but liker auld wives in their red-cloaks, coming frae a field-preaching, than such a scoupe lad as I was. Accordingly, they soon began to stop and load their pieces. Good-gin to you, gentlemen, thought I, if that is to be the gate of it. If you have any farther word with me, you maun come as far as Carriefraw-gaunt. And so off I set, and never huck went faster over the heath than I did; and I never stopped till I had put three waters, reasonably deep, as the season was rainy, half-a-dozen mountains, and a few thousand acres of the worst mires and ling in Scotland, betwixt me and my friends the red-coats."

"It was that job which got you the name of Fate-in-Peril," said the Provost, filling the glasses, and

exclaiming with great emphasis, while his guest, much animated with the recollections which the exploit excited, looked round with an air of triumph for sympathy and applause.—“Here is do your good health; and may you never put your neck in such a venture again.”

“Humph!—I do not know,” answered Summertrees. “I am not like to be tempted with another opportunity”—Yet who knows! And then she made a deep pause.

“May I ask what became of your friend, sir?” said Alan Fairford.

“Ah, poor Harry!” said Summertrees. “I’ll tell you what, sir, it takes time to make up one’s mind to such a venture, as my friend the Provost calls it; and I was told by Neil Mardean,—who was next file to us, but had the luck to escape the gullows by some slight-of-hand trick or other,—that, upon my breaking off, poor Harry stood like one motionless, although all our brethren in captivity made as much tumult as they could, to distract the attention of the soldiers. And ruz he did at last; but he did not know the ground, and either from confusion, or because he judged the descent altogether perpendicular, he fled up the hill to the left, instead of going down at once, and so was easily pursued and taken. If he had followed my example, he would have found enough among the shepherds to hide him, and feed him, as they did me, on bear-meat scones and hrazy mutton,* till better days came round again.”

“He suffered then for his share in the insurrection?” said Alan.

“You may swear that,” said Summertrees. “His blood was too red to be spared when that sort of paint was in request. He suffered, sir, as you call it—that is, he was murdered in cold blood, with many a pretty fellow besides.—Well, we may have our day next—what is fristed is not forgiven—they think us all dead and buried—but—” Here he filled his glass, and muttering some indistinct denunciations, drank it off, and assumed his usual manner, which had been a little disturbed towards the end of the narrative.

“What became of Mr Redgauntlet’s child?” said Fairford.

“Master Redgauntlet!—He was Sir Henry Redgauntlet, as his son, if the child now lives, will be Sir Arthur—I called him Harry from intimacy, and Redgauntlet, as the chief of his name—His proper style was Sir Henry Redgauntlet.”

“His son, therefore, is dead?” said Alan Fairford. “It is a pity so brave a line should draw to a close.”

“He has left a brother,” said Summertrees.

“Edward Hugh Redgauntlet, who has now the representation of the family. And well it is; for though he be unfortunate in many respects, he will keep up the honour of the house better than a boy bred up amongst those bitter Whigs, the relations of his elder brother Sir Henry’s lady. Then they are on no good terms with the Redgauntlet line—bitter Whigs they are in every sense. It was a runaway match betwixt Sir Henry and his lady. Poor thing, they would not allow her to see

him when in confinement—they had even the meanness to leave him without pecuniary assistance; and as all his own property was seized upon and plundered, he would have wanted common necessities, but for the attachment of a fellow who was a famous fiddler—a blind man—I have seen him with Sir Henry myself, both before the affair broke out and while it was going on. I have heard that he fiddled in the streets of Carlisle, and carried what money he got to his master, while he was confined in the castle.”

“I do not believe a word of it,” said Mrs Crosbie, kindling with indignation. “A Redgauntlet would have died twenty times before he had touched a fiddler’s wages.”

“Hout fye—hout fye—all nonsense and pride,” said the Laird of Summertrees. “Scornful dogs will eat dirty puddings, cousin Crosbie—ye little ken what some of your friends were obliged to do, yon time for a sopp of brose, or a bit of hannock.—G—d, I carried a cutler’s wheel for several weeks, partly for need, and partly for disguise—there I went bizz—bizz—whizz—zizz, at every auld wife’s door; and if ever you want yer shears sharpened, Mrs Crosbie, I am the lad to do it for you, if gny wheel was but in order.”

“You must ask my leave first,” said the Provost; “for I have been told you had some queer fashions of taking a kiss instead of a penny, if you liked your customer.”

“Come, come, Provost,” said the lady, rising, “if the maist gets aboon the meal with you, it is time for me to take myself away—And you will come to my room, gentlemen, when you want a cup of tea.”

Alan Fairford was not sorry for the lady’s departure. She seemed too much alive to the honour of the house of Redgauntlet, though only a fourth cousin, not to be alarmed by the inquiries which he proposed to make after the whereabouts of its present head. Strange confused suspicions arose in his mind, from his imperfect recollection of the tale of Wandering Willie and the idea forced itself upon him, that his friend Darsie Latimer might be the son of the unfortunate Sir Henry. But before indulging in such speculations, the point was, to discover what had actually become of him. If he were in the hands of his uncle, might there not exist some rivalry in fortune, or rank, which might induce so stern a man as Redgauntlet to use unfair measures towards a youth whom he would find himself unable to mould to his purpose? He considered these points in silence, during several revolutions of the glasses as they wheeled in galaxy round the bowl, waiting until the Provost, agreeably to his own proposal, should mention the subject, for which he had expressly introduced him to Mr Maxwell of Summertrees.

Apparently the Provost had forgot his promise, or at least was in no great haste to fulfil it. He debated with great earnestness upon the stamp act, which was then impending over the American colonies, and upon other political subjects of the day, but said not a word of Redgauntlet. Alan soon saw that the investigation he meditated must advance, if at all, on his own special motion, and determined to proceed accordingly.

Acting upon this resolution, he took the first opportunity afforded by a pause in the discussion of colonial politics, to say, “I must remind you, Provost Crosbie, of your kind promise to procure

* See Note B. *Excerpt of Poem in Part II.*

* See Note B. *Another Opportunity.*

* HRAZY MUTTON.—The flesh of sheep that has died of disease, not by the hand of the butcher. In pastoral countries it is used as food with little scruple.

some intelligence upon the subject I am so anxious about."

"Gadso!" said the Provost, after a moment's hesitation, "it is very true.—Mr Maxwell, we wish to consult you on a piece of important business. You must know—indeed I think you must have heard, that the fishermen at Brokenburn, and higher up the Solway, have made a raid upon Quaker Goides's stake-nets, and levelled all with the sands."

"In truth I heard it, Provost, and I was glad to hear the scoundrels had so much pluck left, as to right themselves against a fashion which would make the upper heritors a sort of clocking-hens, to hatch the fish that folk below them were to catch and eat."

"Well, sir," said Alan, "that is not the present point. But a young friend of mine was with Mr Goides at the time this violent procedure took place, and he has not since been heard of. Now, our friend, the Provost, thinks that you may be able to advise—"

Here he was interrupted by the Provost and Summertrees speaking out both at once, the first endeavouring to disclaim all interest in the question, and the last to evade giving an answer.

"Me think!" said the Provost; "I never thought twice about it, Mr Fairford; it was neither fish, nor flesh, nor salt herring of mine."

"And I 'able to advise!" said Mr Maxwell of Summertrees; "what the devil can I advise you to do, excepting to send the bellman through the town to cry your lost sheep, as they do spaniel dogs or stray ponies?"

"With your pardon," said Alan, calmly, but resolutely, "I must ask a more serious answer."

"Why, Mr Advocate," answered Summertrees, "I thought it was your business to give advice to the lieges, and not to take it from poor stupid country gentlemen."

"If not exactly advice, it is sometimes our duty to ask questions, Mr Maxwell."

"Ay, sir, when you have your bag-wig and your gown on, we must allow you the usual privilege of both gown and petticoat, to ask what questions you please. But when you are out of your canonicals, the case is altered. How come you, sir, to suppose that I have any business with this riotous proceeding, or should know more than you do what happened there? the question proceeds on an uncivil supposition."

"I will explain," said Alan, determined to give Mr Maxwell no opportunity of breaking off the conversation. "You are an intimate of Mr Redgauntlet—he is accused of having been engaged in this affray, and of having placed under forcible restraint the person of my friend, Darsie Latimer, a young man of property and consequence, whose fate I am here for the express purpose of investigating. This is the plain state of the case; and all parties concerned,—your friend, in particular,—will have reason to be thankful for the temperate manner in which it is my purpose to conduct the matter, if I am treated with proportionate frankness."

"You have misunderstood me," said Maxwell, with a tone changed to more composure. "I told you I was the friend of the late Sir Henry Redgauntlet, who was executed, in 1745, at Blairholm, near Carlisle, but I know no one who at present bears the name of Redgauntlet."

"You know Mr Horries of Birkenwork," said Alan, smiling, "to whom the name of Redgauntlet belongs?"

Maxwell darted a keen reproachful look towards the Provost, but instantly smoothed his brow, and changed his tone to that of confidence and candour.

"You must not be angry, Mr Fairford, that the poor persecuted nonjurors are a little upon the quiet; when such clever young men as you are making inquiries after us. I myself now, though I am quite out of the scrape, and may cock my hat at the Cross as I best like, sunshine or moonshine, have been yet so much accustomed to walk with the lap of my cloak cast over my face, that, faith, if a redcoat walk suddenly up to me, I wish for my shoe and whetstone again for a moment. Now Redgauntlet, poor fellow, is far worse off—he is, you may have heard, still under the lash of the law,—the mark of the beast is still on his forehead, poor gentleman,—and that makes us cautious,—very cautious, which I am sure there is no occasion to let towards you, as you are one of your appearance and manners would wish to trepan a gentleman under misfortune."

"Oh the contrary, sir," said Fairford, "I wish to afford Mr Redgauntlet's friends an opportunity to get him out of the scrape, by procuring the instant liberation of my friend Darsie Latimer. I will engage, that if he has sustained no greater bodily harm than a short confinement, the matter may be passed over quietly, without inquiry; but to attain this end, so desirable for the man who has committed a great and recent infraction of the laws, which he had before grievously offended, very speedy reparation of the wrong must be rendered."

Maxwell seemed lost in reflection, and exchanged a glance or two, not of the most comfortable or congratulatory kind, with his host the Provost. Fairford rose and walked about the room, to allow them an opportunity of conversing together; for he was in hopes that the impression he had visibly made upon Summertrees was likely to ripen into something favourable to his purpose. They took the opportunity, and engaged in whispers to each other, eagerly and reproachfully on the part of the Laird, while the Provost answered in an embarrassed and apologetical tone. Some broken words of the conversation reached Fairford, whose presence they seemed to forget, as he stood at the bottom of the room, apparently intent upon examining the figures upon a fine Indian screen, a present to the Provost from his brother, captain of a vessel in the Company's service. What he overheard made it evident that his errand, and the obstinacy with which he pursued it, occasioned altercation between the whisperers.

Maxwell at length let out the words, "A good fright; and so send him home with his tail scalded, like a dog that has come a prying near on strange premises."

The Provost's negative was strongly interposed—"Not to be thought of!"—"making bad worse!"—"my situation"—"my ability"—"you cannot conceive how obstinate—just like his father."

They then whispered more closely, and at length the Provost raised his drooping head, and spoke in a cheerful tone. "Come, sit down to your glass, Mr Fairford; we have laid our heads together, and you shall see it will not be our fault if you are not quite pleased, and Mr Darsie Latimer let loose."

to take his fiddle under his neck again. But Summertrees thinks it will require you to put yourself into some bodily risk, which maybe you may not be so keen of."

"Gentlemen," said Fairford, "I will not certainly shun any risk by which my object may be accomplished; but I bind it on your consciences — on yours, Mr Maxwell, as a man of honour and a gentleman; and on yours, Provost, as a magistrate and a loyal subject, that you do not enlead me in this matter."

"Nay, as for me," said Summertrees, "I will tell you the truth at once, and fairly own that I can certainly find you the means of seeing Redgauntlet, poor man; and that I will do, if you require it, and conjure him also to treat you as your errand requires; but poor Redgauntlet is much changed — indeed, to say truth, his temper never was the best in the world; however, I will warrant you from any very great danger."

"I will warrant myself from such," said Fairford, "by carrying a proper force with me."

"Indeed," said Summertrees, "you will, do no such thing; for, in the first place, do you think that we will deliver up the poor fellow into the hands of the Philistines, when, on the contrary, my only reason for furnishing you with the clew I am to put into your hands, is to settle the matter amicably on all sides! And secondly, his intelligence is so good, that were you coming near him with soldiers, or constables, or the like, I shall answer for it, you will never lay salt on his tail."

Fairford mused for a moment. He considered that to gain sight of this man, and knowledge of his friend's condition, were advantages to be purchased at every personal risk; and he saw plainly, that, were he to take the course most safe for himself, and call in the assistance of the law, it was clear he would either be deprived of the intelligence necessary to guide him, or that Redgauntlet would be apprized of his danger, and might probably leave the country, carrying his captive along with him. He therefore repeated, "I put myself on your honour, Mr Maxwell; and I will go alone to visit your friend. I have little doubt I shall find him amenable to reason; and that I shall receive from him a satisfactory account of Mr Latimer."

"I have little doubt that you will," said Mr Maxwell of Summertrees; "but still I think it will be only in the long run, and after having sustained some delay and inconvenience. My warrant goes no farther."

"I will take it as it is given," said Alan Fairford. "But let me ask, would it not be better, since you value your friend's safety so highly, and surely would not willingly compromise mine, that the Provost or you should go with me to this man, if he is within any reasonable distance, and try to make him hear reason?"

"Me! — I will not go my foot's length," said the Provost; "and that, Mr Alan, you may be well assured of. Mr Redgauntlet is my wife's fourth cousin, that is undeniable; but were he the last of her kin and mine both, it would ill beseem my office to be communing with rebels."

"Ay, or drinking with nonjurors," said Maxwell, filling his glass. "I would as soon expect to have met Claverhouse at a field-preaching. And as for myself, Mr Fairford, I cannot go, for just the opposite reason. It would be to give dig in the

Provost of this most flourishing and loyal town to associate with Redgauntlet; and for me it would be to assist a scold. There would be post to London, with the tidings that two such Jacobites as Redgauntlet and I had met on a breeze — the Habeas Corpus would be suspended — Fame would sound a charge from Carlisle to the Land's-end — and who knows but the very wind of the rumour might blow my estate from between my fingers, and my body over Errickstane-brae again! No, no; bide a gift — I will go into the Provost's closet, and write a letter to Redgauntlet, and direct you how to deliver it."

"There is pen and ink in the office," said the Provost, pointing to the door of an inner apartment, in which he had his walnut-tree desk, and east-country cabinet.

"A pen that can write, I hope?" said the old Laird.

"It can write and spell baith in right hands," answered the Provost, as the Laird retired and shut the door behind him.

CHAPTER XII.

NARRATIVE OF ALAN FAIRFORD, CONTINUED.

THE room was no sooner deprived of Mr Maxwell of Summertrees's presence, than the Provost looked very warily above, beneath, and around the apartment, hitched his chair towards that of his remaining guest, and began to speak in a whisper which could not have startled "the smallest mouse that creeps on floor."

"Mr Fairford," said he, "you are a good lad; and, what is more, you are my auld friend your father's son. Your father has been agent for this burgh for years, and has a good deal to say with the council; so there have been a sort of obligations between him and me; it may have been now on this side and now on that; but obligations there have been. I am but a plain man, Mr Fairford; but I hope you understand me!"

"I believe you mean me well, Provost; and I am sure," replied Fairford, "you can never better shew your kindness than on this occasion."

"That's it; — that's the very point I would be at, Mr Alan," replied the Provost; "besides, I am, as becomes well my situation, a staunch friend to Kirk and King, meaning this present establishment in church and state; and so as I was saying, you may command my best — advice."

"I hope for your assistance and co-operation also," said the youth.

"Certainly, certainly," said the wary magistrate. "Well now, you see one may love the Kirk, and yet not ride on the rigging of it; and one may love the King, and yet not be trammeling him eternally down the throat of the unhappy folk that may chance to like another King better. I have friends and connections among them, Mr Fairford, as your father may have clients — they are flesh and blood like ourselves, these poor Jacobite bodies — sons of Adam and Eve, after all; and therefore — I hope you understand me! — I am a plain-spoken man."

"I am afraid I do not quite understand you," said Fairford; "and if you have any thing to

say to me in private, my dear Provost, you had better come quickly out with it, for the Laird of Summertrees must finish his letter in a minute or two."

"Not a bit, man—Pate is a lang-headed fellow, but his pen does not clear the paper as his gray-hound does the Tinwald-fur. I gave him a wipe about that, if you noticed; I can say any thing to Pate-in Porri—Indeed, he is my wife's near kinsman."

"But your advice, Provost," said Alan, who perceived that, like a shy horse, the worthy magistrate always started off from his own purpose just when he seemed approaching it.

"Weel, you shall have it in plain terms, for I am a plain man.—Ye see, we will suppose that any friend like yourself were in the deepest hole in the Nith, and making a sprattle for your life. Now, you see, such being the case, I have little chance of helping you, being a fat, short-armed man, and no swimmer, and what would be the use of my jumping in after you?"

"I understand you, I think," said Alan Fairford. "You think that Darsie Latimer is in danger of his life."

"Me!—I think nothing about it, Mr Alan; but if he were, as I trust he is not, he is nae aap's blood akin to you, Mr Alan."

"But here your friend, Summertrees," said the young lawyer, "offers me a letter to this Redgauntlet of yours—What say you to that?"

"Me!" ejaculated the Provost, "me, Mr Alan! I say neither buff nor stye to it—But ye dinna ken what it is to look at Redgauntlet in the face;—better try my wife, who is but a fourth cousin, before ye venture on the Laird himself—just say something about the Revolution, and see what a look she can gie you."

"I shall leave you to stand all the shots from that battery, Provost," replied Fairford. "But speak out like a man—Do you think Summertrees means fairly by me?"

"Fairly—he is just coming—fairly! I am a plain man, Mr Fairford—but ye said fairly!"

"I do so," replied Alan, "and it is of importance to me to know, and to you to tell me if such is the case; for if you do not, you may be an accomplice to murder before the fact, and that under circumstances which may bring it near to murder under trust."

"Murder!—ye spoke of murder!" said the Provost; "no danger of that, Mr Alan—only, if I were you—to speak my plain mind—Here he approached his mouth to the ear of the young lawyer, and, after another acuteness of travail, was safely delivered of his advice in the following abrupt words:—"Take a look into Pate's letter before ye deliver it."

Fairford started, looked the Provost hard in the face, and was silent; while Mr Crosbie, with the self-approbation of one who has at length brought himself to the discharge of a great duty at the expense of a considerable sacrifice, nodded and winked to Alan, as if enforcing his advice; and then swallowing a large glass of punch, concluded, with the sigh of a man released from a heavy burden, "I am a plain man, Mr Fairford."

"A plain man!" said Maxwell, who entered the room at that moment, with the letter in his hand.—"Provost, I never heard you make use of the

word, but when you had some sly turn of your own to work out."

The Provost looked silly enough, and the Laird of Summertrees directed a keen and suspicious glance upon Alan Fairford, who sustained it with professional intrepidity.—There was a moment's pause.

"I was trying," said the Provost, "to dissuade our young friend from his wildgoose expedition."

"And I," said Fairford, "am determined to go through with it. Trusting myself to you, Mr Maxwell, I conceive that I rely, as I before said, on the word of a gentleman."

"I will warrant you," said Maxwell, "from all serious consequences—some inconveniences you must look to suffer."

"To these I shall be resigned," said Fairford, "and stand prepared to run my risk."

"Well then," said Summertrees, "you must go—"

"I will leave you to yourselves, gentlemen," said the Provost, rising; "when you have done with your cough, you will find me at my wife's tea-table."

"And a more accomplished old woman never drank cat-lap," said Maxwell, as he shut the door; "the last word has him, speak it who will—and yet because he is a whilly-whaw body, and has a plausible tongue of his own, and is well enough connected, and especially because nobody could ever find out whether he is Whig or Tory, this is the third time they have made him Provost—but to the matter in hand. This letter, Mr Fairford," putting a sealed one into his hand, "is addressed, you observe, to Mr H—, of B—, and contains your credentials for that gentleman, who is also known by his family name of Redgauntlet, but less frequently addressed by it, because it is mentioned something invidiously in a certain act of Parliament. I have little doubt he will assure you of your friend's safety, and in a short time place him at freedom—that is, supposing him under present restraint. But the point is, to discover where he is—and, before you are made acquainted with this necessary part of the business, you must give me your assurance of honour that you will acquaint no one, either by word or letter, with the expedition which you now propose to yourself."

"How, sir?" answered Alan; "can you expect that I will not take the precaution of informing some person of the route I am about to take, that in case of accident it may be known where I am, and with what purpose I have gone thither?"

"And can you expect," answered Maxwell, in the same tone, "that I am to place my friend's safety, not merely in your hands, but in those of any person you may choose to confide in, and who may use the knowledge to his destruction!—No—no—I have pledged my word for your safety, and you must give me yours to be private in the matter—giff gaff—you know."

Alan Fairford could not help thinking that this obligation to secrecy gave a new and suspicious colouring to the whole transaction; but, considering that his friend's release might depend upon his accepting the condition, he gave it in the terms proposed, and with the purpose of sliding by it.

"And now, sir," he said, "whether am I to proceed with this letter? Is Mr Herries at Brokenburn?"

"He is not; I do not think he will come thither again, until the business of the stake-acts be hushed up, nor would I advise him to do so—the Quakers, with all their demureness, can bear malice as long as other folk; and though I have not the prudence of Mr Provost, who refuses to ken where his friends are concealed during adversity, lest, perchance, he should be asked to contribute to their relief, yet I do not think it necessary or prudent to inquire into Rodgauntlet's wanderings, poor man, but wish to remain at perfect freedom to answer, if asked at, that I ken nothing of the matter. You must, then, go to old Tom Trumbull's at Annan—'Tan Turnpenny,' as they call him,—and he is sure either to know where Rodgauntlet is himself, or to find some one who can give a shrewd guess. But you must attend that old Turnpenny will answer no question on such a subject without you give him the passport, which at present you must do, by asking him the age of the moor; if he answers, 'No! light enough to land a cargo,' you are to answer, 'Then plague on Aberdeen Almanacks,' and upon that he will hold free intercourse with you.—And now, I would advise you to lose no time, for the parole is often changed—and take care of yourself among these moonlight lads, for laws and lawyers do get stand very high in their favour."

"I will set out this instant," said the young barrister; "I will but bid the Provost and Mrs Crosbie farewell, and then get on horseback as soon as the hostler of the George Inn can saddle him;—as for the smugglers, I am neither gauger nor supervisor, and, like the man who met the devil, if they have nothing to say to me, I have nothing to say to them."

"You are a mettled young man," said Summerstree, evidently with increasing good will, on observing an alertness and contempt of danger, which perhaps he did not expect from Alan's appearance and profession,—“a very mettled young fellow indeed! and 't is almost a pity”—— Here he stopped short.

"What is a pity?" said Fairford.

"It is almost a pity that I cannot go with you myself, or at least send a trusty guide."

They walked together to the bedchamber of Mrs Crosbie, for it was in that parlour that the ladies of the period disposed their tea, when the parlour was occupied by the punch-bowl.

"You have been good bairns to-night, gentlemen," said Mrs Crosbie; "I am afraid, Summerstree, that the Provost has given you a bad brewst; you are not used to quit the lee-side of the punch-bowl in such a hurry. I say nothing to you, Mr Fairford, for you are too young a man yet for stoup and bicker; but I hope you will not tell the Edinburgh fine folk that the Provost has scripped you of your sogie, as the sang says!"

"I am much obliged for the Provost's kindness, and yours, madam," replied Alan; "but the truth is, I have still a long ride before me this evening, and the sooner I am on horseback the better."

"This evening?" said the Provost, anxiously; "had you not better take daylight with you to-morrow morning?"

"Mr Fairford will ride as well in the cool of the evening," said Summerstree, taking the word out of Alan's mouth.

The Provost said no more, nor did his wife ask

any questions, nor testify any surprise at the suddenness of their guest's departure.

Having drunk tea, Alan Fairford took leave with the usual ceremony. The Laird of Summerstree seemed studious to prevent any farther communication between him and the Provost, and remained lounging on the landing-place of the stair while they made their adieux—heard the Provost ask if Alan proposed a speedy return, and the latter reply, that his stay was uncertain, and witnessed the parting shake of the hand, which, with a pressure more warm than usual, and a tremulous, "God bless and prosper you!" Mr Crosbie bestowed on his young friend. Maxwell even strolled with Fairford as far as the George, although resisting all his attempts at farther inquiry into the affairs of Rodgauntlet, and referring him to Tom Trumbull, alias Turnpenny, for the particulars which he might find it necessary to inquire into.

At length Alan's hack was produced—an animal long in neck, and high in bone, accoutred with a pair of saddle-bags containing the rider's travelling wardrobe. Proudly surmounting his small stock of necessities, and no way ashamed of a mode of travelling which a modern Mr Silvertongue would consider as the last of degradations, Alan Fairford took leave of the old Jacobite, Pate-in-Peril, and set forward on the road to the loyal burgh of Annan. His reflections during his ride were none of the most pleasant. He could not disguise from himself that he was venturing rather too rashly into the power of outlawed and desperate persons; for with such, only, a man in the situation of Rodgauntlet could be supposed to associate. There were other grounds for apprehension. Several marks of intelligence betwixt Mrs Crosbie and the Laird of Summerstree had not escaped Alan's acute observation; and it was plain that the Provost's inclinations towards him, which he believed to be sincere and good, were not firm enough to withstand the influence of this league between his wife and friend. The Provost's adieux, like Macbeth's amen, had stuck in his throat, and seemed to intimate that he apprehended more than he dared give utterance to.

Laying all these matters together, Alan thought, with no little anxiety, on the celebrated lines of Shakespeare,

—— "A drop,
That in the ocean seeks another drop," &c.

But pertinacity was a strong feature in the young lawyer's character. He was, and always had been, totally unlike the "horse not at hand," who tires before noon through his own over eager exertions in the beginning of the day. On the contrary, his first efforts seemed frequently inadequate to accomplishing his purpose, whatever that for the time might be; and it was only as the difficulties of the task increased, that his mind seemed to acquire the energy necessary to combat and subdue them. If, therefore, he went anxiously forward upon his uncertain and perilous expedition, the reader must acquit him of all idea, even of a passing thought, of the possibility of abandoning his search, and resigning David Latimer to his destiny.

A couple of hours' riding brought him to the little town of Argat, situated on the shores of the Solway, between eight and nine o'clock. The sun had set, but the day was not yet ended; and when he

had alighted and seen his horse properly cared for at the principal inn of the place, he was readily directed to Mr Maxwell's friend, old Tom Trumbull, with whom every body seemed well acquainted. He endeavoured to fish out from the lad that acted as a guide, something of this man's situation and profession; but the general expressions of "a very decent man" — "a very honest body" — "weel to pass in the world," and such like, were all that could be extracted from him; and while Fairford was following up the investigation with closer interrogatories, the lad put an end to them by knocking at the door of Mr Trumbull, whose decent dwelling was a little distance from the town, and considerably nearer to the sea. It was one of a little row of houses running down to the waterside, and having gardens and other accommodations behind. There was heard within the uplifting of a Scottish psalm; and the boy saying, "They are at exercise, sir," gave intimation they might not be admitted till prayers were over.

When, however, Fairford repeated the summons with the end of his whip, the singing ceased, and Mr Trumbull himself, with his psalm-book in his hand, kept open by the insertion of his forefinger between the leaves, came to demand the meaning of this unreasonable interruption.

Nothing could be more different than his whole appearance seemed to be from the confident of a desperate man, and the associate of outlaws in their unlawful enterprises. He was a tall, thin, bony figure, with white hair combed straight down on each side of his face, and an iron-gray hue of complexion; where the lines, or rather, as Quin said of Macklin, the cordage, of his countenance were so sternly adapted to a devotional and even ascetic expression, that they left no room for any indication of reckless daring, or sly dissimulation. In short, Trumbull appeared a perfect specimen of the rigid old Covenanters, who said only what he thought right, acted off no other principle but that of duty, and, if he committed errors, did so under the full impression that he was serving God rather than man.

"Do you want me, sir?" he said to Fairford, whose guide had slunk to the rear, as if to escape the rebuke of the severe old man, — "We were engaged, and it is the Saturday night."

Alan Fairford's preconceptions were so much deranged by this man's appearance, and manner, that he stood for a moment bewildered, and would as soon have thought of giving a cant pass-word to a clergyman descending from the pulpit, as to the respectable father of a family just interrupted in his prayers for and with the objects of his care. Hastily concluding Mr Maxwell had passed some idle jest on him, or rather that he had mistaken the person to whom he was directed, he asked if he spoke to Mr Trumbull.

"To Thomas Trumbull," answered the old man — "What may be your business, sir?" And he glanced his eye to the book he held in his hand, with a sigh like that of a saint desirous of dissolution.

"Do you know Mr Maxwell of Summertown?" said Fairford.

"I have heard of such a gentleman in the country-side, but have no acquaintance with him," answered Mr Trumbull; "who is, as I have heard, a Papist; for the whore that sitteth on the seven

hills seaseath not yet to pour forth the cup of her abomination on these parts."

"Yet he directed me hither, my good friend," said Alld. "Is there another of your name in this town of Annan?"

"None," replied Mr Trumbull, "since my worthy father was removed; he was indeed a shining light. — I wish you good-even, sir."

"Stay one single instant," said Fairford; "this is a matter of life and death."

"Not more than the meeting the burden of our sins where they should be laid," said Thomas Trumbull, about to shut the door in the inquirer's face.

"Do you know," said Alan Fairford, "the Laird of Redgauntlet?"

"Now Heaven defend me from treason and rebellion!" exclaimed Trumbull. "Young gentleman, you are unfortunate. I live here among my own people, and do not consort with Jacobites and sham-mongers."

He needed about to shut the door, but did not shut it, a circumstance which did not escape Alan's notice.

"Mr Redgauntlet is sometimes," he said, "called Herries of Birresworth; perhaps you may know him under that name."

"Friend, you are uncivil," answered Mr Trumbull; "honest men have enough to do to keep one name undefiled. I ken nothing about those who have two. Good-even to you, friend."

He was now about to slam the door in his visitor's face without farther ceremony, when Alan, who had observed symptoms that the name of Redgauntlet did not seem altogether so indifferent to him as he pretended, arrested his purpose by saying, in a low voice, "At least you can tell me what age the moon is!"

The old man started, as if from a trance, and before answering, surveyed the quærist with a keen penetrating glance, which seemed to say, "Are you really in possession of this key to my confidence, or do you speak from mere accident?"

To this keen look of scrutiny, Fairford replied by a smile of intelligence.

The iron muscles of the old man's face did not, however, relax, as he dropped, in a careless manner, the countersign, "Not light enough to land a cargo."

"Then plague of all Abaddon Almanacks!"

"And plague of all fools that waste time," said Thomas Trumbull. "Could you not have said as much at first! — And standing wasting time, and encouraging lookers-on, in the open street too! Come in by — in by."

He drew his visitor into the dark entrance of the house, and shut the door carefully; then putting his head into an apartment which the murmurs within announced to be filled with the family, he said aloud, "A work of necessity and mercy — Malachi, take the book — You will sing six double verses of the hundred and nineteen — and you may lecture out of the Lamentations. And, Malachi," — this he said in an under tone, — "see you give them a sermon of doctrine that will last them till I come back; or else these inconsiderate lads will be out of the house, and away to the public, wasting their precious time, and, it may be, putting themselves in the way of causing the morning tide."

An inarticulate answer from within intimated Malachi's acquiescence in the commands imposed:

and Mr Trumbull, shutting the door, muttered something about fast bind, fast find, turned the key, and put it into his pocket; and then bidding his visiter have a care of his steps, and make no noise, he led him through the house, and out at a back-door, into a little garden. Here a plaited alley conducted them, without the possibility of their being seen by any neighbour, to a door in the garden-wall, which being opened, proved to be a private entrance into a three-stalled stable; in one of which was a horse, that whinnied on their entrance. "Hush, hush!" cried the old man, and presently seconded his exhortations to silence by throwing a handful of corn into the manger, and the horse soon converted his acknowledgment of their presence into the usual sound of munching and grinding his provender.

As the light was now failing fast, the old man, with much more alertness than might have been expected from the rigidity of his figure, closed the window-shutters in an instant, produced phoebophorus and matches, and lighted a stable-lantern, which he placed on the corn bin, and then addressed Fairford. "We are private here, young man; and as some time has been wasted already, you will be so kind as to tell me what is your errand. Is it about the way of business, or the other job?"

"My business with you, Mr Trumbull, is to request you will find me the means of delivering this letter, from Mr Maxwell of Summertrees to the Laird of Redgauntlet."

"Humph—a fashionable job!—Pate Maxwell will still be the auld man—always Pate-in-Peril—Craig-in-Peril, for what I know. Let me see the letter from him."

He examined it with much care, turning it up and down, and looking at the seal very attentively. "All's right, I see; it has the private mark for haste and good. I bless my Maker that I am no great man, or great man's fellow; and so I think no more of these passages than just to help them forward in the way of business. You are an utter stranger in these parts, I warrant!"

Fairford answered in the affirmative.

"Ay—I never saw them make a wisef choice—I must call some one to direct you what to do—Stay, we must go to him; I believe. You are well recommended to me, friend, and doubtless trusty; otherwise you may see more than I would like to shew, or am in the use of shewing in the common line of business."

Saying this, he placed his lantern on the ground, beside the post of one of the empty stalls, drew up a small spring bolt which secured it to the floor, and then forcing the post to one side, discovered a small trap-door. "Follow me," he said, and dived into the subterranean descent to which this secret aperture gave access.

Fairford plunged after him, not without apprehensions of more kinds than one, but still resolved to prosecute the adventure.

The descent, which was not above six feet, led to a very narrow passage, which seemed to have been constructed for the precise purpose of excluding every one who chanced to be an inch nearer in girth than was his conductor. A small vaulted room, of about eight feet square, received them at the end of this lane. Here Mr Trumbull left Fairford alone, and returned for an instant, as he said, to shut his concealed trap-door.

Fairford liked not his departure, as it left him in utter darkness; besides that his breathing was much affected by a strong and stifling smell of spirits, and other articles of a savour more powerful than agreeable to the lungs. He was very glad, therefore, when he heard the returning steps of Mr Trumbull, who, when once more by his side, opened a strong though narrow door in the wall, and conveyed Fairford into an immense magazine of spirit-casks, and other articles of contraband trade.

There was a small light at the end of this range of well-stocked subterranean vaults, which, upon a low whistle, began to flicker and move towards them. An undefined figure, holding a dark lantern, with the light averted, approached them, whom Mr Trumbull thus addressed:—"Why were you not at worship, Job; and this Saturday at e'en?"

"Swanston was loading the Jenny, sir; and I stayed to serve out the article."

"True—a work of necessity, and in the way of business. Does the Jumping Jenny sail this tide?"

"Ay, ay, sir; she sails for—"

"I did not ask you where she sailed for, Job," said the old gentleman, interrupting him. "I thank my Maker, I know nothing of their incomings or outgoings. I sell my article fairly and in the ordinary way of business; and I wash my hands of every thing else. But what I wished to know is, whether the gentleman called the Laird of the Solway Lakes is on the other side of the Border even now?"

"Ay, ay," said Job, "the Laird is something in my own line, you know—a little contraband or so. There is a statute for him—But no matter; he took the sands after the splore at the Quaker's fish-traps yonder; for he has a real heart, the Laird, and is always true to the country-side. But avast—is all snug here?"

So saying, he suddenly turned on Alan Fairford the light side of the lantern he carried, who, by the transient gleam which it threw in passing on the man who bore it, saw a huge figure, upwards of six-feet high, with a rough hairy cap on his head, and a set of features corresponding to his bulky frame. He thought also he observed pistols at his belt.

"I will answer for this gentleman," said Mr Trumbull; "he must be brought to speech of the Laird."

"That will be little steering," said the subordinate personage; "for I understood that the Laird and his folk were no sooner on the other side than the land-sharks were on them, and some mounted lobsters from Carlisle; and so they were obliged to split and squander. There are new brooms out to sweep the country of them they say; for the brush was a hard one; and they say there was a lad drowned;—he was not one of the Laird's gang, so there was the less matter."

"Peace!—prithce, peace, Job Rudge," said honest, pacific Mr Trumbull. "I wish thou couldst remember, man, that I desire to know nothing of your roars and splores, your brooms and brushes. I dwell here among my own people; and I sell my commodity to him who comes in the way of business; and so wash my hands of all consequences, as becomes a quiet subject and an honest man. I never take payment, save in ready money."

"Ay, ay," muttered he with the lantern, "your worship, Mr Trumbull, understands that in the way of business."

"Well, I hope you will *one day* know, Job," answered Mr Trumbull,—"the comfort of a conscience void of offence, and that fears neither gauger nor collector, neither excise nor customs. The business is to pass this gentleman to Cumberland upon earnest business, and to procure him speech with the Laird of the Solway Lakes—I suppose that can be done! Now I think Nanty Ewart, if he sails with the brig this morning tide, is the man to set him forward."

"Ay, ay, truly is he," said Job; "never man knew the Border, dale and fell, pasture and ploughland, better than Nanty; and he can always bring him to the Laird, too, if you are sure the gentleman's right. But indeed that's his own look-out; for were he the best man in Scotland, and the chairman of the d—d Board to boot, and had fifty men at his back, he were as well not visit the Laird for any thing but good. As for Nanty, he is word and blow, a d—d deal fiercer than Cristie Nixon that they keep such a diil about. I have seen them both tried, by—"

Fairford now found himself called upon to say something; yet his feelings, upon finding himself thus completely in the power of a canting hypocrite, and of his retainer, who had so much the air of a determined ruffian, joined to the strong and abominable fume which they snuffed up with indifference, while it almost deprived him of respiration, combined to render utterance difficult. He stated, however, that he had no evil intentions towards the Laird, as they called him, but was only the bearer of a letter to him on particular business, from Mr Maxwell of Summertree.

"Ay, ay," said Job, "that may be well enough; and if Mr Trumbull is satisfied that the service is right, why, we will give you a cast in the Jumping Jenny this tide, and Nanty Ewart will put you on a way of finding the Laird, I warrant you."

"I may for the present return, I presume, to the inn where I left my horse?" said Fairford.

"With pardon," replied Mr Trumbull, "you have been over far ben with us for that; but Job will take you to a place where you may sleep rough till he calls you. I will bring you what little baggage you can need—for those who go on such errands must not be dainty. I will myself see after your horses for a merciful man is merciful to his beast—a matter too often forgotten in our way of business."

"Why, Master Trumbull," replied Job, "you know that when we are chased, it's no time to shorten sail, and so the boys do ride whip and spur"—He stopped in his speech, observing the old man had vanished through the door by which he had entered—"That's always the way with old Turnpenny," he said to Fairford; "he cares for nothing of the trade but the profit—now, d—w, if I don't think the fun of it is better worth while! But come along, my fine chap; I must stow you away in safety until it is time to go aboard."

CHAPTER XIII.

NARRATIVE OF ALAN FAIRFORD, CONTINUED.

FAIRFORD followed his gruff guide among a labyrinth of barrels and pantheons, on which he had more than once like to have broken his nose, and from thence into what, by the glimpse of the painting lantern upon a desk and writing materials, seemed to be a small office for the despatch of business. Here there appeared no exit; but the smuggler, or smuggler's ally, availing himself of a ladder, removed an old picture, which showed a door about seven feet from the ground, and Fairford, still following Job, was involved in another tortuous and dark passage, which involuntarily reminded him of Peter Peablack's lavant. At the end of this labyrinth, when he had little guess where he had been conducted, and was, according to the French phrase, totally *désorienté*, Job suddenly set down the lantern, and availing himself of the flame to light two candles which stood on the table, asked if Alan would choose any thing to eat, recommending, at all events, a sing of brandy to keep out the night air. Fairford declined both, but inquired after his baggage.

"The old master will take care of that himself," said Job Rutledge; and drawing back in the direction in which he had entered, he vanished from the farther end of the apartment, by a mode which the candles, still shedding an imperfect light, gave Alan no means of ascertaining. Thus the adventurous young lawyer was left alone in the apartment to which he had been conducted by so singular a passage.

In this condition, it was Alan's first employment to survey, with some accuracy, the place where he was; and accordingly, having trimmed the lights, he walked slowly round the apartment, examining its appearance and dimensions. It seemed to be such a small dining-parlour as is usually found in the house of the better class of artisans, shopkeepers, and such persons, having a recess at the upper end, and the usual furniture of an ordinary description. He found a door, which he endeavoured to open, but it was locked on the outside. A corresponding door on the same side of the apartment admitted him into a closet, upon the front shelves of which were punch-bowls, glasses, tea-cups, and the like, while on one side was hung a horseman's great-coat of the coarsest materials, with two great horse-pistols peeping out of the pocket, and on the floor stood a pair of well-spattered jack-boots, the usual equipment of the time, at least for long journeys.

Not greatly liking the contents of the closet, Alan Fairford shut the door, and resumed his scrutiny round the walls of the apartment, in order to discover the mode of Job Rutledge's retreat. The secret passage was, however, too artificially concealed, and the young lawyer had nothing better to do than to meditate on the singularity of his present situation. He had long known that the excise laws had occasioned an active contraband trade betwixt Scotland and England, which then, as now, existed, and will continue to exist, until the utter abolition of the wretched system which establishes an inequality of duties betwixt the different parts of the same kingdom; a system, he it said in thinking, mightily resembling the conduct of a pugilist, who should tie up one arm that he might fight the

better with the other. But Fairford was unprepared for the expensive and regular establishments by which the illicit traffic was carried on, and could not have conceived that the capital employed in it should have been adequate to the erection of these extensive buildings, with all their contrivances for secrecy of communication. He was musing on these circumstances, not without some anxiety for the progress of his own journey, when suddenly, as he lifted his eyes, he discovered old Mr Trumbull at the upper end of the apartment, bearing in one hand a small bundle, in the other his dark lantern, the light of which, as he advanced, he directed full upon Fairford's countenance.

Though such an apparition was exactly what he expected, yet he did not see the grim, stern old man present himself thus suddenly without emotion; especially when he recollected, what to a youth of his pious education was peculiarly shocking, that the grizzled hypocrite was probably that instant arisen from his knees to Heaven, for the purpose of engaging in the mysterious transactions of a desperate and illegal trade.

The old man, accustomed to judge with ready sharpness of the physiognomy of those with whom he had business, did not fail to remark something like agitation in Fairford's demeanour. "Have ye taken the Rue?" said he. "Will ye take the Rueaf from the mare, and give up the venture?"

"Never!" said Fairford, firmly, stimulated at once by his natural spirit, and the recollection of his friend; "never, while I have life and strength to follow it out!"

"I have brought you," said Trumbull, "a clean shirt, and some stockings, which is all the baggage you can conveniently carry, and I will cause one of the lads lend you a horseman's coat, for it is ill, sailing or riding without one; and, touching your valise, it will be as safe in my poor house, were it full of the gold of Ophir, as if it were in the depth of the mine."

"I have no doubt of it," said Fairford.

"And now," said Trumbull, again, "I pray you to tell me by what name I am to name you to Nanty [which is Antony] Ewart?"

"By the name of Alan Fairford," answered the young lawyer.

"But that," said Mr Trumbull, in reply, "is your own proper name and surname."

"And what other should I give?" said the young man; "do you think I have any occasion for an alias? And, besides, Mr Trumbull," added Alan, thinking a little railleury might intimate confidence, of spirit, "you blessed yourself, but a little while since, that you had no acquaintance with those who defiled their names so far as to be obliged to change them."

"True; very true," said Mr Trumbull; "nevertheless, young man, my grey hairs stand unreprieved in this matter; for, in my line of business, when I sit under my vine and my fig-tree, exchanging the strong waters of the north for the gold which is the price thereof, I have, I thank Heaven, no disguises to keep with any man, and wear my own name of Thomas Trumbull, without any chance that the name may be polluted. Whereas, those who set to journey in many ways, and amongst strange people, mayst do well to have two names, as thou hast two shirts, the one to keep the other clean."

Here he emitted a chuckling grunt, which lasted

for two vibrations of the pendulum exactly, and was the only approach towards laughter in which old Turnpenny, as he was nicknamed, was ever known to indulge.

"You are witty, Mr Trumbull," said Fairford; "but jests are no arguments—I shall keep my own name."

"At your own pleasure," said the merchant; "there is but one name which," &c. &c. &c.

We will not follow the hypocrite through the impious cant which he added, in order to close the subject.

Alan followed him, in silent abhorrence, to the recess in which the beaufet was placed, and which was so artificially made as to conceal another of those traps with which the whole building abounded. This concealment admitted them to the same winding passage by which the young lawyer had been brought thither. The path which they now took amid these mazes, differed from the direction in which he had been guided by Rutledge. It led upwards, and terminated beneath a garret window. Trumbull opened it, and with more agility than his age promised, clambered out upon the leads. If Fairford's journey had been hitherto in a stifled and subterranean atmosphere, it was now open, lofty, and airy enough; for he had to follow his guide over leads and slates, which the old snuggler traversed with the dexterity of a cat. It is true, his course was facilitated by knowing exactly where certain stepping-places and holdfasts were placed, of which Fairford could not so readily avail himself; but, after a difficult and somewhat perilous progress along the roofs of two or three houses, they at length descended by a skylight into a garret room, and from thence by the stairs into a public-house; for such it appeared, by the ringing of bells, whistling for waiters and attendance, bawling of "House, house, heys!" chorus of sea songs, and the like noises.

Having descended to the second story, and entered a room there, in which there was a light, old Mr Trumbull rung the bell of the apartment thrice, with an interval betwixt each, during which, he told deliberately the number twenty. Immediately after the third ringing the landlord appeared, with stealthy step, and an appearance of mystery on his buxom visage. He greeted Mr Trumbull, who was his landlord as it proved, with great respect, and expressed some surprise at seeing him so late, as he termed it, "on Saturday e'en."

"And I, Robin Hastie," said the landlord to the tenant, "am more surprised than pleased, to hear the honourable Sabbath-day and I must mind you, that it is contravening the terms of your task, which stipulates, that you should shut your public on Saturday at nine o'clock, at latest."

"Yes, sir," said Robin Hastie, as way alarmed at the gravity of the rebuke, "but you must take tent that I have admitted nobody but you, Mr Trumbull, (who by the way admitteth yourself,) since nine o'clock; for the most of the folk have been here for several hours about the ladies; and so on, of the brig. It is not full tide yet, and I cannot put the men out into the street. If I did, they would go to some other public, and their souls would be none the better, and my purse smelt the want; for how am I to pay the rent, if I do not sell the liquor?"

"Nay, then," said Thomas Trumbull, "if it is a work of necessity, and in the honest independent way of business, no doubt there is balm in Gilead. But prudence, Robin, wit thee see if Nanty Ewart be, as is most likely, amongst these unhappy toppers; and if so, let him stop this way cannyly, and speak to me and this young gentleman. And it's dry talking, Robin — you must minister to us a bowl of punch — ye ken my gage."

"From a mutchkin to a gallon, I ken your honour's taste, Mr Thomas Trumbull," said mine host; "and ye shall hang me over the sign-post if there be a drop mair lemon or a curn less sugar than just suits you. There are three of you — you will be for the auld Scots peremptory pint-stoup¹ for the success of the voyage?"

"Better pray for it than drink for it, Robin," said Mr Trumbull. "Yours is a dangerous trade, Robin; it hurts mony a one — bath hot and glist. But ye will get the blue bowl, Robin — the blue bowl — that will stoken all their drouth, and prevent the sinful repetition of whipping for an eke of a Saturday at e'en. Ay, Robin, it is a pity of Nanty Ewart — Nanty likes the turning up of his little finger unco weel, and we mauna stint him, Robin, so as we leave him seelie to steer by."

"Nanty Ewart could steer through the Pentland Firth though he were as drunk as the Baltic Ocean," said Robin Hastie; and instantly tripping down stairs, he speedily returned with the materials for what he called his *brout*, which consisted of two English quarts of spirits, in a huge blue bowl, with all the ingredients for punch, in the same formidable proportion. At the same time he introduced Mr Nanty or Nanty Ewart, whose person, although he was a good deal flustered with liquor, was different from what Fairford expected. His dress was what is emphatically termed the shabby genteel — a frock with tarnished lace — a small cocked-hat, ornamented in a singular way — a scarlet waistcoat, with faded embroidery, breeches of the same, with silver knee-bands, and he wore a smart hanger and a pair of pistols in a sullied sword-belt.

"Here I come, patron," he said, shaking hands with Mr Trumbull. "Well, I see you have got some grog aboard."

"It is not my custom, Mr Ewart," said the old gentleman, "as you well know, to become a clam-breeze or carouse thus late on Saturday at e'en; but I wanted to recommend to your attention a young friend of ours, that is going upon some-thing particular journey, with a letter to our friend the Laird from Fate-in-Peril, as they call him."

"Ay — indeed! — he must be in high trust for so young a gentleman. I wish you joy, sir," bowing to Fairford. "By'r lady, as Shakespeare says, you are bringing up a neck for a fair end. — Come, patron, we will drink to Mr What-shall-call-um — What is his name? — Did you tell me? — And have I forgot it already?"

"Mr Alan Fairford," said Trumbull.

"Ay, Mr Alan Fairford — a good samp for a fair trader — Mr Alan Fairford; and may he be long withheld from the topmost pound of ambition,

which I take to be the highest round of a certain ladder."

While he spoke, he seized the punch ladle, and began to fill the glasses. But Mr Trumbull arrested his hand, until he had, as he expressed himself, sacrificed the liquor by a long gage; during the pronunciation of which, he shut indeed his eyes, but his nostrils became dilated, as if he were snuffing up the fragrant beverage with peculiar complacency.

When the glass was at length over, the three friends sat down to their beverage, and invited Alan Fairford to partake. Anxious about his situation, and disgusted as he was with his company, he craved, and with difficulty obtained permission, under the allegation of being fatigued, seated, and the like, to stretch himself on a couch which was in the apartment, and attempted at least to procure some rest before high water, when the vessel was to sail.

He was at length permitted to use his freedom, and stretched himself on the couch, having his eyes for some time fixed on the jovial party he had left, and straining his ears to catch if possible a tittle of their conversation. This he soon found was to no purpose; for what did actually reach his ears was disguised so completely by the use of past words, and the thieves-Latin called slang, that even when he caught the words, he found himself as far as ever from the sense of their conversation. At length he fell asleep.

It was after Alan had slumbered for three or four hours, that he was awakened by voices bidding him rise up and prepare to be jugging. He started up accordingly, and found himself in presence of the same party of boon companions, who had just despatched their huge bowl of punch. To Alan's surprise, the liquor had made but little innovation on the brains of men, who were accustomed to drink at all hours, and in the most inordinate quantities. The landlord indeed spoke a little quick, and the texts of Mr Thomas Trumbull stumbled on his tongue; but Nanty was one of those toppers, who becoming early what *bon vivants* term flustered, remain whole nights and days at the same point of intoxication; and, in fact, as they are seldom entirely sober, can be as rarely seen absolutely drunk. Indeed, Fairford had he not known how Ewart had been engaged whilst he himself was asleep, would almost have sworn when he awoke, that the man was more sober than when he first entered the room.

He was confirmed in this opinion when they descended below, where two or three sailors and ruffian-looking fellows awaited their commands. Ewart took the whole direction upon himself, gave his orders with brevity and precision, and looked to their being executed with the silence and order which that peculiar crisis required. All were now dismissed for the night, which lay, as Fairford was given to understand, a little farther down the river, which is navigable for vessels of light burden, till almost within a mile of the town.

When they lifted from the inn, the landlord bid them good-by. Old Trumbull walked a little way with them, but the air had probably considerable effect on the state of his brain; for after reminding Alan Fairford that the next day was the honourable Sabbath, he became extremely enervate in an attempt to exhort him to keep it holy. At length

¹ The Scottish pint of liquid measure comprehends four English measures of the same denomination. The fact is well known of my good countrymen, who, deriving testimony by the railway of the Southern, of the small denomination of the Scottish pint, at length answered, "Ay, ay! But the devil tak them that has the best pint-stoup."

being perhaps sensible that he was becoming unintelligible, he thrust a volume into Fairford's hand — hiccuping at the same time — "Good book — good book — fine hymn-book — fit for the honourable Sabbath, whilk awakes us to-morrow morning." — Here the iron tongue of time told five from the town steeple of Annan, to the farther confusion of Mr Trumbull's already disordered ideas. "Ay! Is Sunday come and gone already! — Heaven be praised! Only it is a marvel the afternoon is so dark for the time of the year — Sabbath has slipped over quietly, but we have reason to bless ourselves it has not been altogether misemployed. I heard little of the preaching — a cauld moralist, I doubt, served that out — but, oh — the prayer — I mind it as if I had said the words myself." — Here he repeated one or two petitions, which were probably a part of his family devotions, before he was summoned forth to what he called this way of business. "I never remember a Sabbath pass so lannily off in my life." — Then he recollected himself a little, and said to Alan, "You may read that book, Mr Fairford, to-morrow, all the same, though it be Monday; for, you see, it was Saturday when we were together; and now it's Sunday and it's dark night — so the Sabbath has slipped clean away through our fingers like water through a sieve, which abideth not; and we have to begin again to-morrow morn- ing, in the weariful, base, mean, earthly employ- ments, whilk are unworthy of an immortal spirit — always excepting the way of business."

Three of the fellows were now refusing to the town, and, at Ewart's command, they cut short the patriarch's exhortation, by leading him back to his own residence. The rest of the party then proceeded to the brig, which only waited their arrival, to get under weigh and drop down the river. Nanty Ewart betook himself to steering the brig, and the very touch of the helm seemed to dispel the remain- ing influence of the liquor which he had drunk, since, through a troublesome and intricate channel, he was able to direct the course of his little vessel with the most perfect accuracy and safety.

Alan Fairford, for some time, availed himself of the clearness of the summer morning to gaze on the diply seen shores betwixt which they glided, becoming less and less distinct, as they receded from each other, until at length, having adjusted his little bundle by way of pillow, and wrapt around him the great-coat with which old Trumbull had equipped him, he stretched himself on the deck, to try to recover the slumber out of which he had been awakened. Sleep had scarce begun to settle on his eyes, ere he found something stirring about his person. With ready presence of mind he recol- lected his situation, and resolved to show no alarm until the purpose of this became obvious; but he was soon relieved from his anxiety, by finding it was only the point of Nanty's attention to his com- fort, who was wrapping around him, as softly as he could, a great boat-cloak, in order to defend him from the morning air.

"Thou art but a cockard," he muttered, "but were pity thou wert knocked off the perch before seeing a little more of the sweet and sour of this world — though, faith, if thou hast the usual lack of it, the best way were to leave thee to the chance of a poisoning fever."

These words, and the awkward courtesy with which the skipper of the little brig tucked the sea-

coat round Fairford, gave him a confidence of safety which he had not yet thoroughly possessed. He stretched himself in more security on the hard planks, and was speedily asleep, though his slum- bers were feverish and unrefreshing.

It has been elsewhere intimated that Alan Fair- ford inherited from his mother a delicate constitu- tion, with a tendency to consumption; and, being an only child, with such a cause for apprehension, care, to the verge of effeminacy, was taken to pre- serve him from damp beds, wet feet, and those va- rious emergencies, to which the Caledonian boys of much higher birth, but more active habits, are generally accustomed. In man, the spirit sustains the constitutional weakness, as in the winged tribes the feathers bear aloft the body. But there is a bound to these supporting qualities; and as the pinions of the bird must at length grow weary, so the *vis animi* of the human struggler becomes broken down by continued fatigue.

When the voyager was awakened by the light of the sun now riding high in Heaven, he found him- self under the influence of an almost intolerable headache, with heat, thirst, shooting across the back and loins, and other symptoms intimating violent cold, accompanied with fever. The manner in which he had passed the preceding day and night, though perhaps it might have been of little conse- quence to most young men, was to him, delicate in constitution and nurture, attended with bad and even perilous consequences. He felt this was the case, yet would fain have combated the symptoms of indisposition, which, indeed, he imputed chiefly to sea-sickness. He sat up on deck, and looked on the scene around, as the little vessel, having borne down the Solway Firth, was beginning, with a favourable northerly breeze, to bear away to the southward, crossing the entrance of the Wampole river, and preparing to double the most northerly point of Cumberland.

But Fairford felt annoyed with deadly sickness, as well as by pain of a distressing and oppressive character; and neither Criffel, rising in majesty on the one hand, nor the distant yet more picturesque outline of Skiddaw and Glaramara upon the other, could attract his attention in the manner in which it was usually fixed by beautiful scenery, and espe- cially that which had in it something new as well as striking. Yet it was not in Alan Fairford's nature to give way to despondence, even when seconded by pain. He had recourse, in the first place, to his pocket; but instead of the little Sallust he had brought with him, that the perusal of a clas- sical author might help to pass away a heavy hour, he pulled out the exposed hymn-book with which he had been presented a few hours before, by that temperate and scrupulous person, Mr Thomas Trumbull, *alias* Turnpenny. The volume was bound in sable, and its exterior might have become a palter. But what was Alan's astonishment to read on the title-page the following words: — "Merry Thoughts for Merry Men; or, Mother Mid- night's Miscellany for the Sober Hours;" and turn- ing over the leaves, he was disgusted with profligate tales, and more profligate songs, ornamented with figures corresponding in infancy with the letter- press.

"Good God!" he thought, "and did this heary reprobate condemn his family together, and, with such a flagrant pledge of infamy in his bosom,

money; but the poor stibbler, the penniless dominie, having married his cousin of Kittlebanket, must next have proclaimed her frailty to the whole parish, by mourning the throne of Presbyterian penance, and proving, as *Offshore* says, 'his love a whore,' in face of the whole congregation.

"In this extremity I dared not say where I was, and so thought to go home to my father. But first I got Jack Hadaway, a lad from the same parish, and who lived in the same infernal stair, to make some inquiries how the old gentleman had taken the matter. I soon, by way of answer, learned, to the great increase of my comfortable reflections, that the good old man made as much clamour, as if such a thing as a man's eating his wedding dinner without saying grace had never happened since Adam's time. He did nothing for six days but cry out, 'Ishabod, Ishabod, the glory is departed from my house!' and on the seventh he preached a sermon, in which he enlarged on this incident as illustrative of one of the great occasions for humiliation, and causes of national defection. I hope the course he took comforted himself — I am sure it made the ashamed to shew my nose at home. So I went down to Leith, and, exchanging my hoddin' gray coat of my mother's spinning for such a jacket as this, I entered my name at the rendezvous as an able-bodied landsman, and sailed with the tender round to Plymouth, where they were fitting out a squadron for the West India. There I was put aboard the Fearnought, Captain Daredevil — among whose crew I soon learned to fear Satan, (the terror of my early youth,) as little as the toughest Jack on board. I had some qualms at first, but I took the remedy" (tapping the case-bottle) "which I recommend to you, being as good for sickness of the soul as for sickness of the stomach — What, you won't! — very well, I must then — here is to ye."

"You would, I am afraid, find your education of little use in your new *Amition*!" said Fairford.

"I arden me, sir," resumed the Captain of the *Jumping Jenny*; "my handful of Latin, and small pinch of Greek, were as useless as old junk, to be sure; but my reading, writing, and accounting, stood me in good stead, and brought me forward; I might have been schoolmaster — ay, and master, in time; but that valiant liquor, rum, made a conquest of me rather too often, and so, make what sail I could, I always went to leeward. We were four years broiling in that blasted climate, and I came back at last with a little prize-money. — I always had thoughts of putting things to rights in the *Covenant-Close*, and reconciling myself to my father. I found out Jack Hadaway, who was *Tupowing* away with a dozen of wretched boys, and a fine string of stories he had ready to regale my ears withal. My father had lectured on 'what he called 'my falling away,' for seven Sabbaths, when, just as his parishioners began to hope that the course was at an end, he was found dead in his bed on the eighth Sunday morning. Jack Hadaway assured me, that if I wished to atone for my errors, by undergoing the *rite* of the first martyr, I had only to go to my native village, where the very stones of the altar would rise up against me as my father's murderers. How can a pretty item — well, my tongue close to my mouth for an hour, and only able at last to utter the name of *Mrs. Thompson*. Oh, this was *dearer* than for my Job's

comforters! My sudden departure — my father's no less sudden death — had prevented the payment of the agents of my board and lodging — the landlord was a *haberdashier*, with a heart as rotten as the muslin wares he dealt in. Without respect to her age, or gentle kin, my Lady Kittlebanket was ejected from her airy habitation — her *portico* — pot, silver *posnet-dish*, silver-mounted spectacles, and Daniel's Cambridge Bible, sold, at the *Cross* of Edinburgh, to the *middle* who would bid highest for them, and she herself driven to the workhouse, where she got in with difficulty, but was easily enough lifted out, at the end of the month, as soon as her friends could desire. Merry tidings this to me, who had been the *d—d*" (he paused a moment) "*origo mali* — God, I think my confusion would sound better in Latin than in English!

"But the best jest was *banished* — I had just power to stammer out something about *Jem* — by my faith he *had* an answer! I had taught *Jem* one trade, and, like a prudent girl, she had found out another for herself; unluckily, they were both *contraband*, and *Jem* Cantrepp, daughter of the Lady Kittlebanket, had the honour to be transported to the plantations, for street-walking and pocket-picking, about six months before I touched shore."

He changed the bitter tone of affected *placidity* into an attempt to laugh, then drew his swarthy hand across his swarthy eyes, and said in a more natural accent, "Poor *Jem*!"

There was a pause — until Fairford, pitying the poor man's state of mind, and believing he saw something in him that, but for early error and subsequent profligacy, might have been excellent and noble, helped on the conversation by asking, in a tone of commiseration, how he had been able to endure such a load of calamity.

"Why, very well," answered the seaman; "exceedingly well — like a tight ship in a *drift* gale. — Let me recollect. — I remember thanking *Jem*, very composedly, for the interesting and agreeable communication; I then pulled out my *carving* pouch, with my board of molders, and taking out two pieces, I bid *Jack* keep the rest till I came back, as I was for a cruise about *And* *Blackie*. The poor devil looked anxiously, but I shook him by the hand, and ran down stairs, in such confusion of mind, that notwithstanding what I had heard, I expected to meet *Jem* at every turning."

"It was market-day, and the usual number of rogues and fools were assembled at the *Cross*. I observed every body looked strange on me, and I thought some laughed. I fancy I had been making queer faces enough, and perhaps talking to myself. When I saw myself used in this manner, I held out my clenched fist straight before me, stamped my head, and, like a ram when he rushes the way, darted off right down the street, scattering groups of weather-beaten birds and post-wigged *burghers*, and bearing down all before me. I heard the cry of 'Seize the madman!' echoed, in *Colts* *manes*, from the City Guard, with 'Seize the madman!' — but pursuit and opposition were in vain. I resumed my career; the *shell* of the war, I supposed, led me to *Leith*, where, soon after, I found myself walking very quietly, on the shore, admiring the *beach* *forming* and *round* *coastings* of the women, and *staring* *long* *look*, with a man at the end of one of them, *round* *look*, by way of *check*."

"I was opposite to the rendezvous, fortunately my

place of refuge—in I bolted—found one or two old acquaintances, made half-a-dozen new ones—drank for two days—was put aboard the tender²—off to Portsmouth—then landed at the Haslar hospital in a fine himing-hot fever. Never mind—I got better—nothing can kill me—the ‘West Indies were my lot again, for since I did not go where I deserved in the next world, I had something as like such quarters as can be had in this—black devils for inhabitants—flames and earthquakes, and so forth, for your element. Well, brother, something or other I did or said—I can’t tell what—How the devil should I, when I was as drunk as David’s sow, you know!—But I was punished, my lad—made to kiss the wench that never speaks but when she scolds, and that’s the gunner’s daughter, comrade. Yes, the minister’s son of—no matter where—has, the cat’s scratch on his back! This roused me, and when we were ashore with the boat, I gave three fitches of the dirt, after a stout tumble, to the fellow I blamed most, and so took the bush for it. There were plenty of wild lads then along shore—and I don’t care who knows—I went on the account, look you—sailed under the black flag and marrow-bones—was a good friend to the sea, and an enemy to all that sailed on it.”

Fairford, though uneasy in his mind at fittling himself, a lawyer, so close to a character so lawless, thought it best, nevertheless, to put a good face on the matter; and asked Mr Ewart, with as much unconcern as he could assume, “whether he was fortunate as a rover!”

“No, no—d—n it, no,” replied Nanty; “the devil a crumb of better was ever churned that would stick upon my bread. There was no order among us—he that was captain to-day, was swabber to-morrow; and as for plunder—they say old Avery, and one or two close hunka, made money; but in my time, all went as it came; and reason good, for if a fellow had saved five dollars, his throat would have been out in his hammock—And then it was a cruel, bloody work—Pah,—we’ll say no more about it. I broke with them at last, for what they did on board of a bit of a snow—no matter what it was—had enough, since it frightened me—I took French leave, and came in upon the proclamation, so I am free of all that business. And here I sit, the skipper of the Jumping Jenny—a nutshell of a thing, but goes through the water like a dolphin. If it were not for yon hypocritical scoundrel at Annan, who has the best end of the profit, and takes none of the risk, I should be well enough—as well as I want to be. Here is no lack of my best friend,”—touching his cane-bottle;—“but, to tell you a secret, he said I have got so used to each other, I begin to think he is like a professed joker, that makes your sides sore with laughing, if you see him but now and then; but if you take up house with him, he can only make your head stupid. But I warrant the old fellow is doing the best he can for me, after all.”

“And what may that be?” said Fairford.

“He is *murdering* me,” replied Nanty Ewart; “and I am only sorry he is so long about it.”

So saying he jumped on his back, and, springing up and down the deck, gave his comrade, in his usual swagger and swagger, a goodly quantity of spirits which he had contrived to stow away while recounting his adventures.

Although far from feeling well, Fairford endeavoured to rouse himself and walk to the head of the brig, to enjoy the beautiful prospect, as well as to take some note of the course which the vessel held. To his great surprise, instead of standing across to the opposite shore from which she had departed, the brig was going down the Firth, and apparently steering into the Irish Sea. He called to Nanty Ewart, and expressed his surprise at the course they were pursuing, and asked why they did not stand straight across the Firth for some port in Cumberland.

“Why, this is what I call a reasonable question, now,” answered Nanty; “as if a ship could go as straight to its port, as a horse to the stable, or a free-trader could sail the Solway as securely as a King’s cutter! Why, I’ll tell ye, brother—if I do not see a smoke on Bowness, that is the village upon the headland yonder, I must stand out to sea for twenty-four hours at least, for we must keep the weather-gage if there are hawks abroad.”

“And if you do see the signal of safety, Master Ewart, what is to be done then?”

“Why then, and in that case, I must keep off till night, and then run you, with the kegs and the rest of the lumber, ashore at Skibburr-oss.”

“And then I am to meet with this same Laird whom I have the letter for?” continued Fairford.

“That,” said Ewart, “is thereafter as it may be; the ship has its course—the fair trader has his port—but it is not easy to say where the Laird may be found. But he will be within twenty miles of us, off or on—and it will be my business to guide you to him.”

Fairford could not withstand the passing impulse of terror which crossed him, when thus reminded that he was so absolutely in the power of a man, who, by his own account, had been a pirate, and who was at present, in all probability, an outlaw as well as a contraband trader. Nanty Ewart guessed the cause of his involuntary shuddering.

“What the devil should I gain,” he said, “by passing so poor a card as you are!—Have I not had a score of trumps in my hand, and did I not play it fairly!—Ay, I say the Jumping Jenny can run in other wars as well as kegs. Put *sigma* and *tau* to Ewart, and see how that will spell—D’ye take me now?”

“No indeed,” said Fairford; “I am utterly ignorant of what you allude to.”

“Now, by Jove!” said Nanty Ewart, “thou art either the deepest or the shallowest fellow I ever met with—or you are not right after all. I wonder where Sampestrees could pick up such a tender along-shore. Will you let me see his letter?”

Fairford did not hesitate to gratify his wish, which, he was aware, he could not easily resist. The master of the Jumping Jenny looked at the direction very attentively, then turned the letter to and fro, and examined each flourish of the pen, as if he were judging of a piece of ornamented manuscript; then handed it back to Fairford, without a single word of remark.

“Am I right now?” said the young lawyer.

“Why, for that matter,” answered Nanty, “the letter is right, sure enough; but whether you are right or not is your own business rather than mine.”—At a certain point of the back of a knife, he marked a scar as clear as his finger, and began to make away with good perseverance.

Alan Fairford continued to regard him with a melancholy feeling, divided between the interest he took in the unhappy man, and a not unnatural apprehension for the issue of his own adventure.

Ewart, notwithstanding the stupefying nature of his pastime, seemed to guess what was working in his passenger's mind; for, after they had remained some time engaged in silently observing each other, he suddenly dashed his cigar on the deck, and said to him, "Well then, if you are sorry for me, I am sorry for you. D—n me, if I have cared a button for man or mother's son, since two year's since, when I had another peep of Jack Hadaway. The fellow was got as fat as a Norway whale—married to a great Dutch built queen that had brought him six children. I believe he did not know me, and thought I was come to rob his house; however, I made up a poor face, and told him who I was. Poor Jack would have given me shelter and clothes, and began to tell me of the mooidores that were in bank, when I wanted them. Egad, he changed his note when I told him what my life had been, and only wanted to pay me my cash and get rid of me. I never saw so derriested a visage. I burst out a-laughing in his face, told him it was all a humbug, and that the mooidores were all his own, henceforth and for ever, and so ran off. I cauded one of our people send him a bag of tea and a keg of brandy, before I left—poor Jack! I think you are the second person these ten years, that has cared a tobacco-stopper for Nanty Ewart."

"Perhaps, Mr Ewart," said Fairford, "you live chiefly with men too deeply interested for their own immediate safety, to think much upon the distress of others."

"And with whom do you yourself consort, I pray?" replied Nanty, smartly. "Why, with plotters, that can make no plot to better purpose than their own hanging; and incendiaries, that are snapping the flint upon wet tinder. You'll as soon raise the dead as raise the Highlands—you'll as soon get a grunt from a dead sow as any comfort from Wales or Cheshire. You think because the pot is boiling, that no scum but yours can come uppermost—I know better, by—. All these rackets and riots that you think are trending your way, have no relation at all to your interest; and the best way to make the whole kingdom friends again at once, would be the alarm of such an undertaking as these mad old fellows are trying to launch into."

"I really am not in such secrets as you seem to allude to," said Fairford; and, determined at the same time to avail himself as far as possible of Nanty's communicative disposition, he added, with a smile, "And if I were, I should not hold it prudent to make them much the subject of conversation. But I am sure, so sensible men as Summertown and the Laird may correspond together without offence to the state."

"I take you, friend—I take you," said Nanty Ewart, upon whom, at length, the liquor and tobacco had begun to make considerable impression. "As to what gentlemen may or may not correspond about, why we may permit the question, as the old Professor used to say at the Hall; and as to Summertown, I will say nothing, knowing him to be a good man. But I say that this fellow the Laird is a villain in the second degree; that he is standing up for all the worst fellows who should be broken down head and heels, by telling them

stories about their ancestors and the forty-five; and that he is trying to turn all waters into his own mill-dam, and to set his sails to all winds. And because the London people are rousing about for some patches of their own, he thinks to win them to his turn with a wet finger. And he gets encouragement from some, because they want a heap of money from him; and from others, because they fought for the cause once, and are ashamed to go back; and others, because they have nothing to lose; and others, because they are dishonest fools. But if he has brought you, as you say, I say not whom, into this scrape, with the hope of doing any good, he's a d—d dirty devil, and that's all I can say for him; and you are gone, which is worse than being decoy-ducks, or lame-chicken others. And so here is to the prosperity of King George the Third, and the true Presbyterian religion, and confusion to the Pope, the Devil, and the French-der!—I'll tell you what, Mr Fairford, I am but tenth owner of this bit of a craft, the *Jumping Jenny*—but tenth owner—and must call her by my owners' directions. But if I were whole owner, I would not have the brig be made a ferry-boat for your Jacobitical, old fashioned Popish rick-raft, Mr Fairford—I would not, by my soul; they should walk the plank, by the gods, as I have seen better men do when I sailed under the *Whit-d*'s—salmon colours. But being contraband goods, and on board my vessel, and I with my sailing orders in my hand, why, I am to forward them as directed—say, John Robert's, keep her up a bit with the helm!—And so, Mr Fairweather, what I do is—as the d—d villain Turnpenny says—all in the way of business."

He had been speaking with difficulty for the last five minutes, and now at length dropped on the deck, fairly silenced by the quantity of spirits which he had swallowed, but without having secured any glimpse of the gale, or even of the extravagance of intoxication.

The old sailor stepped forward and flung a sea-coat over the stumpe's shoulders, and added, looking at Fairford, "Pity of him he should have this fault; for without it, he would have been as clever a fellow as ever trode a plank with sea-leather."

"And what are we to do now?" said Fairford. "Stand off and on, to be sure, till we see the signal, and then obey orders."

So saying, the old man turned to his duty, and left the passenger to amuse himself with his own speculations. Presently afterward a light column of smoke was seen rising from the little hatchway.

"I can tell you what we are to do now, thank you," said the sailor. "We'll stand out to sea, and then run in again with the evening tide, and make the Wampool river, or, if there's no light, we can run up the Kirklake or Leadie, with the long boat."

Fairford, unwell before, felt this last sentence condemn him to an agony of uneasy hours, with his disordered stomach and aching head, unable to endure. There was no remedy, however, but patience, and the recollection that he was waiting in the name of Humbug. At the end of half an hour he began to feel better, and was able to negotiate a small bag of salted fish, the more purpose of which was to keep him from the various odours with which he was surrounded, than that

of pitch, to all the complicated smells of the hold. His heart, too, throbb'd under the heat, and he felt as if in full progress towards a high fever.

The seamen, who were civil and attentive, considering their calling, observed his distress, and one contrived to make an awning out of an old sail, while another compounded some lemonade, the only liquor which their passenger could be prevailed upon to touch. After drinking off, he obtained, but could not be said to enjoy, a few hours of troubled slumber.

CHAPTER XV.

NARRATIVE OF ALAN FAIRFORD, CONTINUED.

ALAN FAIRFORD'S spirit was more ready to encounter labour than his frame was adequate to support it. In spite of his exertions, when he awoke, after five or six hours' slumber, he found that he was so much disabled by dizziness in his head, and pains in his limbs, that he could not raise himself without assistance. He heard, with some pleasure, that they were now running right for the Wampool river, and that he would be put on shore in a very short time. The vessel accordingly lay to, and presently showed a well in her signal, which was hastily answered by signals from on shore. Men and horses were seen to come down the broken path which leads to the shore; the latter all properly tackled for carrying their loading. Twenty sailing barks were pushed aloft at once, and crowded round the brig with much clamour, laughter, cursing, and jesting. Amidst all this apparent confusion there was the essential regularity. Nauty Ewart again walked his quarterdeck as if he had no arched spirits in his life, issued the necessary orders with precision, and saw them executed with punctuality. In half an hour the loading of the brig was in a great measure disposed of the boats; in a quarter of an hour more, it was landed on the beach, and another interval of about the same duration was sufficient to distribute it on the various strings of packhorses which waited for that purpose, and which instantly dispersed, each on its own proper adventure. More mystery was observed in loading the ship's boat with a quantity of small barrels, which seemed to contain ammunition. This was not done until the commercial customers had been dismissed; and it was not until this was performed that Ewart proposed to Alan, as he lay stunned with pain and noise, to accompany him ashore.

It was with difficulty that Fairford could get over the side of the vessel, and he could not rest himself on the steps of the boat without assistance from the captain and his people. Nauty Ewart, who saw nothing in this worse than an ordinary fit of sea-sickness, applied the usual topics of consolation. He assured his passenger that he would be quite well by and by, when he had been half an hour on terra firma, and that he ought to drink a glass and smoke a pipe with him at Father Crackenthorp's, for all that he felt a little out of the way in leaving the vessel home.

"Go to Father Crackenthorp?" said Fairford, "I am scarcely able to support the question."

"I'll attend a fellow as to what he means," answered Nauty.

"Ah, how much good brain and I have made little of in our day! By my word, Mr Fairbird, he is the prince of shinkers, and the father of the five tuffs — not a stingy hypocritical devil like old Turnpenny Skindink, that drinks drunk on other folk's cost, and thinks it sin when he has to pay for it — but a real hearty old cock; — the sharks have been at and about him this many a day, but Father Crackenthorp knows how to trim his sails — never a warrant but he hears of it before the ink's dry. He is *bonus socius* with headborough and constable. The King's Exchequer could not bribe a man to inform against him. If any such rascal were to cast up, why he would miss his cat's next morning, or be sent to seek them in the Solway. He is a statesman, though he keeps a public; but, indeed, that is only for convenience, and to excuse his having callage and folk about him; his wife's a scanny woman — and his daughter Doll too. Gad, you'll be in port there till you get round again; and I'll keep a y word with you, and bring you to speech of the laird. Gad, the only trouble I shall have is to get you out of the house; for Doll is a rare wench, and my dame a funny old one, and Father Crackenthorp the rarest companion! He'll drink you a bottle of rum or brandy without starting, but never wet his lips with the nasty Scottish stuff that the canting old scoundrel Turnpenny has brought into fashion. He is a gentleman, every inch of him, old Crackenthorp; in his own way, that is; and besides, he has a share in the Jumping Jenny, and many a moonlight outfall besides. He can give Doll a pretty penny, if he likes the tight fellow that would turn in with her for life."

In the midst of this prolonged panegyric on Father Crackenthorp, the boat touched the beach, the rowers backed their oars to keep her afloat, whilst the other fellows jumped into the surf, and, with the most rapid dexterity, began to land the barred ashore.

"Up with them higher on the beach, my hearties," exclaimed Nauty Ewart — "High and dry — high and dry — this gear will not stand wasting. Now, out with our spare hand here — high and dry with him too. What's that! — the galloping of horse! Oh, I hear the neigh of the packhorses — they are our own folk."

By this time all the boat's load was ashore, consisting of the little barrels; and the boat's crew, standing to their arms, ranged themselves in front, waiting the advance of the horses which came clattering along the beach. A man, overgrown with corpulence, who might be distinguished in the moonlight, panting with his own exertions, appeared at the head of the cavalcade, which consisted of horses linked together, and accommodated with packhorses, and chains for securing the bags, which made a dreadful clattering.

"How now, Father Crackenthorp?" said Ewart — "Why this hurry with your doggo! — We mean to stay a night with you, and find your old baggage, and my dame's bones — The signal is up, man, and all is right."

"All is wrong, Nauty," cried the man in front in answer — "and you are the last that is like to find it up, unless you break off — there are some horsemen at the gate."

—and at length reached a cultivated country, divided, according to the English fashion of agriculture, into very small fields or closes; by high banks, overgrown with underwood, and surmounted by hedge-row trees, amongst which winded a number of impracticable and complicated lanes, where the boughs projecting from the embankments on each side, intercepted the light of the moon, and endangered the safety of the horsemen. But through this labyrinth the experience of the guides conducted them without a blunder, and without even the slackening of their pace. In many places, however, it was impossible for three men to ride abreast, and therefore the burden of supporting Alan Fairford fell alternately to old Jephson, and to Nanty; and it was with much difficulty that they could keep him upright in his saddle.

At length, when his powers of suifrance were quite worn out, and he was about to imploze them to give him to his fate in the first cottage or shed — or under a haystack or a hedge — or any where, so he was left at ease, Collier, who rode ahead, passed back the word that they were at the avenue to Fairladies — “Was he to turn up?”

Committing the charge of Fairford to Jephson, Nanty dashed up to the head of the troop, and gave his orders. — “Who knows the house best?”

“Sam Skelton’s a Catholic,” said Lowther.

“A A — I had religion,” said Nanty, of whose Presbyterian education, a hatred of Popery seemed to be the only remnant. “But I am glad there is one amongst us, any how. — You, Sam, being a Papist, know Fairladies, and the old maidens, I dare say; so do you fall out of the line, and wait here with me; and do you, Collier, carry on to Walinford bottom, then turn down the beck till you come to the old mill, and Goodman Grist the Miller, or old Peel-the-Causeway, will tell you where to stow; but I will be up with you before that.”

The string of loaded horses then struck forward at their former pace, while Nanty, with Sam Skelton, waited by the road-side till the rear came up, when Jephson and Fairford joined them, and, to the great relief of the latter, they began to proceed at an easier pace than formerly, suffering the gang to precede them, till the clatter and clang attending their progress began to die away in the distance. They had not proceeded a pistol-shot from the place where they parted, when a short turning brought them in front of an old mouldering gateway, whose heavy pinnacles were decorated in the style of the seventeenth century, with clumsy architectural ornaments; several of which had fallen down from decay, and lay scattered about, no farther from having been taken than just to remove them out of the direct approach to the avenue. The great stone pillars, flanking the white in the moonlight, had some fanciful resemblance to supernatural apparitions, and the air of neglect all around, gave an uncomfortable idea of the habitation to those who passed its avenue.

“There used to be no gate here,” said Skelton, taking their way unimpededly stopped.

“But there is a gate now, and a better too,” said Nanty in a low voice from within. “Who he you, and what do you want at this time of night?”

“I want to come to speak of the ladies — of the ladies, Arthur,” said Nanty; “and to ask you to help me.”

“I have no speech to be sent of the Miss

Arthur at this time of night, and you may carry your sick man to the doctor,” answered the fellow from within, gruffly. “For as sure as there is savour in salt, and seeds in rosemary, you will get no entrance — put your pipes up and be jogging on.”

“Why, Dick Gardener,” said Skelton, “be thou then turned porter?”

“What, do you know who I am?” said the domestic sharply.

“I know you, by your by-word,” answered the other; “What, have you forget little Sam Skelton, and the brook in the barrel?”

“No, I have not forgotten you,” answered the acquaintance of Sam Skelton; “but my orders are peremptory to let no one up the avenue this night, and therefore —”

“But we are armed, and will not be kept back,” said Nanty. “Hark ye, fellow, were it not better for you to take a guinea and let us in, than to have us break the door first, and thy pate afterwards? for I won’t see my comrade die at your door — be assured of that.”

“Why, I durns know,” said the fellow; “but what cattle were those that rode by in such hurry?”

“Why, some of our folk from Bowness, Stonicullam, and Shierby,” answered Skelton; “Jack Lowther, and old Jephson, and broad Will Lamplight, and such like.”

“Well,” said Dick Gardener, “as sure as there is savour in salt, and scent in rosemary, I thought it had been the troopers from Carlisle and Wigton, and the sound brought my heart to my mouth.”

“Had thought thou wouldst have known the clatter of a cask from the clash of a broadsword, as well as e’er a quaffer in Cumberland,” said Skelton.

“Come, brother, less of your jaw and more of your legs, if you please,” said Nanty; “every moment we stay is a moment lost. Go to the ladies, and tell them that Nanty Ewary, of the Jumping Jenny, has brought a young gentleman, charged with letters from Scotland, to a certain gentleman of consequence in Cumberland — that the soldiers are out, and the gentleman is very ill, and if he is not received at Fairladies, he must be left either to die at the gate, or to be taken, with all his papers about him, by the redcoats.”

Away ran Dick Gardener with this message; and, in a few minutes, lights were seen to flit about, which convinced Fairford, who was now, in consequence of the halt, a little restored to self-possession, that they were traversing the front of a tolerably large mansion-house.

“What if thy friend, Dick Gardener, comes not back again?” said Jephson to Skelton.

“Why, then,” said the person addressed, “I shall owe him just such a kicking as thou, old Jephson, had from Dan Cooke, and will pay at duly and truly as he did.”

The old man was about to make an angry reply, when his doubts were silenced by the return of Dick Gardener, who announced that Miss Arthur was coming herself as far as the gateway to speak with them.

Nanty Ewary started at a low tone, the suspicious of old maid and the suspicious of Catholicism, that made so ready obstacles to helping a fellow-creature, and which Miss Arthur, a hearty Protestant, or rather a friend of the friends of the friends; but the lady presently appeared, in an elegant fashion.

grumbling. She was attended by a waiting-maid with a lantern, by means of which she examined the party on the outside, as closely as the imperfect light, and the spars of the newly-erected gate, would permit.

"I am sorry we have disturbed you so late, Madam Arthuret," said Nanty; "but the case is this—"

"Holy Virgin," said she, "why do you speak so loud? Pray, are you not the Captain of the Saints Genevieve?"

"Why, ay, ma'am," answered Ewart, "they call the brig so at Dunkirk, sure enough; but along shore here, they call her the Jumping Jenny."

"You brought over the holy Father Buonaventure, did you not?"

"Ay, ay, madam, I have brought over enough of them black cattle," answered Nanty.

"Fie! fie! friend," said Miss Arthuret; "it is a pity that the saints should commit these good men to a heretic's care."

"Why, no more they would, ma'am," answered Nanty, "could they find a Papish lubber that knew the coasts as I do; then I am frisky as steel to owners, and always look after cargo—live lumber, or dead flesh, or spirits; all is one to me; and your Catholics have such d—d large hoods, with yargon, ma'am, that they can sometimes hide two faces under them. But here is a gentleman dying; with letters about him from the Laird of Summertrees to the Laird of the Lochs, as they call him, along Solway, and every minute he lies here is a nail in his coffin."

"Saint Mary! what shall we do?" said Miss Arthuret; "we must admit him, I think, at all risks. — You, Richard Gardener, help one of these men to carry the gentleman up to the Place; and you, Selby, see him lodged at the end of the long gallery. — You are a heretic, Captain, but I think you are trusty, and I know you have been trusted — but if you are impeding on me —"

"Not I, madam — never attempt to impose on ladies of your experience — my practice that way has been all among the young ones. — Come, clearly, Mr Fairford — you will be taken good care of — try to walk."

Alan did so; and, refreshed by his halt, declared himself able to walk to the house with the sole assistance of the gardener.

"Why, that's hearty. Thank thee, Dick, for lending him thine arm." — and Nanty slipped into his hand the guinea he had promised. — "Farewell, then, Mr Fairford, and farewell, Madam Arthuret, for I have been too long here."

So saying, he and his two companions threw themselves on horseback, and went off at a gallop. Yet, even above the clatter of their hoofs did the incorrigible Nanty hallow out the old ballad —

"A lovely lass to a fair come,
To a waiting-maid's company;
In what, my dear, are you to blame?
Come tell me soon, I pray;
For I, my dear, I dare not blame —
But say, tell me, I love you dearly."

"Holy Virgin," continued Miss Seraphina, as the unblinking agents watched her own; "what private business be there, now, and what flights and gambols do he put to you?" The saints be good to us, what a nightman that man! — the Miss never seen at Fairford. Help me to make fast

the gate, Richard, and then shalt come down again to wait on it, lest there come more unwelcome visitors. — Not that you are unwelcome, young gentleman, for it is sufficient that you need such assistance as we can give you, to make you welcome to Fairford — only, another time would have done as well — but, hem! I dare say it is all for the best. The avenue is none of the smoothest, sir, to your spot. Richard Gardener should have had it mown and levelled, but he was obliged to go on a pilgrimage to Saint Winifred's Well, in Wales. — (Here Dick gave a short dry cough, which, as if he had found it betrayed some internal feeling a little at variance with what the lady said, he converted into a muttered *Santo Winifred, ora pro nobis*. Miss Arthuret, meantime, proceeded; — "We never interfere with our servants' vows or penances, Master Fairford — I know a very worthy father of your name, perhaps a relation — I say, we never interfere with our servants' vows. Our Lady forbid they should not know some difference between our service and a heretic's. — Take care, sir, you will fall if you have not a care. Also, by night and day there are many stumbling-blocks in our paths!"

With more talk to the same purpose, all of which tended to show, a charitable, and somewhat silly woman, with a strong inclination to her superstitious devotion, Miss Arthuret entertained her new guest, as, stumbling at every obstacle which the devotion of his guide, Richard, had left in his path, he at last, by ascending some stone steps, decorated on the side with griffins, or some heraldic anomalies, attained a terrace extending in front of the Place of Fairfords; an old-fashioned gentleman's house of some consequence, with a range of notched gable-ends and narrow windows, relieved by here and there an old turret about the size of a pepper-box. The door was locked, during the brief absence of the mistress; a dim light glimmered through the washed door of the hall, which opened beneath a huge stone porch, loaded with jasmine and other creepers. All the windows were dark as pitch.

Miss Arthuret tapped at the door. "Sister, sister Angelica."

"Who is there?" was answered from within; "is it you, sister Seraphina?"

"Yes, yes, undo the door; do you not know my voice?"

"No doubt, sister," said Angelica, undoing both and bar; "but you know our charge, and this evening is watchful to surprise us — *incassat elus les portes* with the brevity. — Whom have you brought here? Oh, sister, what have you done?"

"It is a young man," said Seraphina, hesitating to interrupt her sister's monotonous, "a young man, I believe, of our worthy Father Fairford, who has the gate by the captain of that blessed saint, the Sainte Genevieve — almost dead — and —" with despatches to —

She lowered her voice as she mentioned the last words.

"Nay, there is no help," said Angelica; "but it is unkindly."

During this dialogue between the women of Fairford, Dick Gardener deposited the gentleman in a chair, where the young lady, after a moment of hesitation, expressing a becoming reluctance to touch the hand of a stranger, yet her finger and

thump upon Fairford's wrist, and counted his pulses.

"There is fever here, sister," she said; "afflicted must call Ambrose, and we must send some of the scrifuge."

Ambrose arrived presently, a plausible and respectable-looking old servant, bred in the family, and who had risen from rank to rank in the Arthur service, till he was become half-physician, half-almoner, half-butler, and entire governor; that is, when the Father Confessor, who frequently eased him of the toils of government, chanced to be abroad. Under the direction, and with the assistance, of this venerable personage, the unlucky Alan Fairford was conveyed to a decent apartment at the end of a long gallery, and, to his inexpressible relief, consigned to a comfortable bed. He did not attempt to resist the prescription of Mr Ambrose, who not only presented him with the proposed draught, but proceeded so far as to take a considerable quantity of blood from him, by which last operation he probably did his patient much service.

CHAPTER XVI.

NARRATIVE OF ALAN FAIRFORD, CONTINUED.

On the next morning, when Fairford awoke, after so gory refreshing slumbers, in which were mingled many wild dreams of his father, and of Darcie Latimer,—of the dandel in the green mantle, and the vestals of Fairladies,—of drinking small beer with Nanty Ewert, and being immersed in the Solway with the Jumping Jenny,—he found himself in no condition to dispute the order of Mr Ambrose that he should keep his bed; from which, indeed, he could not have raised himself without assistance. He became sensible that his anxiety, and his constant efforts for some days past, had been too much for his health, and that, whatever might be his impatience, he could not proceed in his undertaking until his strength was re-established.

In the meanwhile, no better quarters could have been found for an invalid. The attendants spoke under their breath, and moved only on tiptoe—nothing was done unless *par ordonnance du medecin*—Ecceampus reigned paramount in the premises at Fairladies. Once a day, the ladies came in great state to wait upon him, and inquire after his health, and it was then that Alan's natural civility, and the thankfulness which he expressed for their timely and obstinate assistance, raised him considerably in their esteem. He was on the third day removed to a better apartment than that in which he had been at first accommodated. When he was permitted to drink a glass of wine, it was of the first quality; one of those curious old-fashioned cobwebbed bottles being produced on the occasion, which are only to be found in the crypts of old country-seats, where they may have lurked undisturbed for more than half a century.

But however delightful a residence for an invalid, Fairladies, as his present situation became soon aware, was not so agreeable to a convalescent. When he turned himself to the window to see as he could from bed, behold it was closely grated, and he had no view except of a little paved court. There was nothing remarkable, except his garden,

besides having their windows so secured. But, then Fairford observed, that whosoever entered or left the room, always looked the door with great care and circumspection; and some proposals which he made to take a walk in the gallery, or even in the garden, were so coldly received, both by the ladies and their prime minister, Mr Ambrose, that he saw plainly such an extension of his privileges as a guest would not be permitted.

Anxious to ascertain whether this excessive hospitality would permit him his proper privilege of free-agency, he announced to this important functionary, with grateful thanks for the care with which he had been attended, his purpose to leave Fairladies next morning, requesting only, as a continuance of the favours with which he had been loaded, the loan of a horse to the next town; and, assuring Mr Ambrose that his gratitude would not be limited by such a trifle, he slipped three guineas into his hand, by way of seconding his proposal. The fingers of that worthy domestic closed as naturally upon the honorarium, as if a degree in the learned faculty had given him a right to clutch it; but his answer concerning Alan's proposed departure was at first evasive, and when he was pushed, it amounted to a peremptory assurance that he could not be permitted to depart to-morrow; it was as much as his life was worth, and his ladies would not authorize it.

"I know best what my own life is worth," said Alan; "and I do not value it in comparison to the business which requires my instant attention."

Receiving still no satisfactory answer from Mr Ambrose, Fairford thought it best to state his resolution to the ladies themselves, in the most measured, respectful, and grateful terms; but still such as expressed a firm determination to depart on the morrow, or next day at farthest. After some attempts to induce him to stay, on the alleged score of health, which were so expressed that he was convinced they were only used to delay his departure, Fairford plainly told them that he was intrusted with despatches of consequence to the gentleman known by the name of Herries, Redgauntlet, and the Laird of the Lochs; and that it was matter of life and death to deliver them early.

"I dare say, Sister Angelica," said the elder Miss Ardenet "that the gentleman is honest; and if he is really a relation of Father Fairford, we can run no risk."

"Jean Maria!" exclaimed the younger. "Oh, fie, Sister Scraphina! Fie, fie!—*ade rero*—get thee behind me!"

"Well, well; but, sister—Sister Angelica—let me speak with you in the gallery."

So out the ladies rushed in their silks and tianes, and it was a good half hour ere they rustled in again, with importance and awe on their countenances.

"To tell you the truth, Mr Fairford, the cause of our desire to delay you is—there is a religious gentleman in this house at present—"

"A most excellent person, indeed," said the sister Angelica.

"An ancestor of his Master!" echoed Scraphina,—"and we should be glad that, for conscience sake, you would hold some discourse with him before your departure."

"The?" thought Fairford, "the murder is out—there is a design of assassination!—I am not of the good old ladies, but I shall soon send off the

priest, I think."—He then answered aloud, "that he should be happy to converse with any friend of theirs—that in religious matters he had the greatest respect for every modification of Christianity, though, he must say, his belief was made up to that in which he had been educated; nevertheless, if his seeing the religious person they recommended could in the least show his respect——"

"It is not quite that," said Sister Seraphina, "although I am sure the day is too short to hear him—Father Buonaventura, I mean—speak upon the concerns of our souls; but——"

"Come, come, sister Seraphina," said the younger, "it is needless to talk so much about it. His—his Eminence—I mean Father Buonaventura—will himself explain what he wants this gentleman to know."

"His Eminence!" said Fairford, surprised.—"Is this gentleman so high in the Catholic Church?—The title is given only to Cardinals, I think."

"He is not a Cardinal as yet," answered Seraphina; "but I assure you, Mr Fairford, he is as high in rank as he is eminently endowed with good gifts, and——"

"Come away," said Sister Angelica. "Holy Virgin, how you do talk!—What has Mr Fairford to do with Father Buonaventura's rank!—Only, sir, you will remember that the Father has been always accustomed to be treated with the most profound deference; indeed——"

"Come away, sister," said Sister Seraphina, in her turn; "who talks now, I pray you! Mr Fairford will know how to comport himself."

"And we had best both leave the room," said the younger lady, "for here his Eminence comes."

She lowered her voice to a whisper as she pronounced the last words; and as Fairford was about to reply, by assuring her that any friend of hers should be treated by him with all the ceremony he could expect, she imposed silence on him, by holding up her finger.

A solemn and stately step was now heard in the gallery; it might have proclaimed the approach not merely of a bishop or cardinal, but of the Sovereign Pontiff himself. Nor could the sound have been more respectfully listened to by the two ladies, had it announced that the Head of the Church was approaching in person. They drew themselves, like sentinels on duty, one on each side of the door by which the long gallery communicated with Fairford's apartment, and stood there immovable, and with countenances expressive of the deepest reverence.

The approach of Father Buonaventura was so slow, that Fairford had time to notice all this, and to marvel in his mind what wily and ambitious priest could have contrived to subject his worthy but simple-minded hostesses to such superstitious trammels. Father Buonaventura's entrance and appearance in some degree accounted for the whole.

He was a man of middle life, about forty, or upwards; his eyes, or fatigue, or indulgence, had brought on the appearance of premature old age, and given to his face features a cast of seriousness or even sadness. A noble countenance, however, still remained; and though his complexion was altered, and wrinkles showed upon his brow in many a significant line, still the lady remarked the full and well-opened eye, and the well-formed nose, showed how handsome in better days he must

have been. He was tall, but lost the advantage of his height by stooping; and the cane which he wore always in his hand, and occasionally used, as well as his slow though majestic gait, seemed to intimate that his form and limbs felt already some touch of infirmity. The colour of his hair could not be discovered, as, according to the fashion, he wore a periwig. He was handsomely, though gravely dressed in a secular habit, and had a cockade in his hat; circumstances which did not answer Fairford, who knew that a military dingy was very often assumed by the seminary prelate, whose visits to England, or residence there, subjected them to legal penalties.

As this stately person entered the apartment, the two ladies facing inward, the soldiers on their post when about to salute a superior officer, dropped on either hand of the Father a curtsey so profound, that the hoop petticoats which performed the duty seemed to sink down to the very floor, may, though it, as if a trap-door had opened for the descent of the dancer who performed this act of reverence.

Father seemed accustomed to such homage, profound as it was; he turned his person a little way first towards one sister, and then towards the other, while, with a gracious inclination of his person, which certainly did not amount to a bow, he acknowledged their courtesy. But he passed forward without addressing them, and seemed by doing so, to intimate that their presence in the apartment was unnecessary.

They accordingly glided out of the room, retreating backwards, with hands clasped and eyes cast upwards, as if imploring blessings on the religious man whom they venerated so highly. The doors of the apartment was shut after them, but not before Fairford had perceived that there were one or two men in the gallery, and that, contrary to what he had before observed, the door, though shut, was not locked on the outside.

"Can the good souls apprehend danger from me to this god of their idolatry?" thought Fairford. But he had no time to make farther observations, for the stranger had already reached the middle of his apartment.

Fairford rose to receive him respectfully, but as he fixed his eyes on the visitor, he thought that the Father avoided his looks. His reasons for remaining incognito were evident enough to account for this, and Fairford hastened to relieve him, by looking downwards in his turn; but when again he raised his face, he found the broad light eyes of the stranger so fixed on him, that he was almost put out of countenance by the steadiness of his gaze. During this time they remained standing.

"Take your seat, sir," said the Father; "you have been an invalid."

He spoke with the tone of one who deems an inferior to be seated in his presence, and his voice was full and melodious.

Fairford, somewhat surprised to find himself overawed by the air of superiority, which could be only properly exerted towards one who from malignity gave an equal influence, sat down at his bidding, as if moved by springs, and sat at a loss how to smother the feeling of equality, but which he felt still they ought to stand. The stranger lost the advantage which he had obtained.

"Your name, sir, I am informed is Fairford," said the Father.

Alan answered by a bow.

"Called to the Scottish bar," continued his visitor. "There is, I believe, in the West, a family of that rank called Fairford of Fairford."

Alan thought this a strange observation from a foreign ecclesiastic, as his name indicated Father Buonaventura to be; but only answered he believed there was such a family.

"Do you count kindred with them, Mr Fairford?" continued the inquirer.

"I have not the honour to lay such a claim," said Alan. "My father's industry has raised his family from a low and obscure situation—I have no hereditary claim to distinction of any kind.—May I ask the name of these inquiries?"

"You will know it presently," said Father Buonaventura, who had given a dry and dissatisfied look at the young man's acknowledging a plebeian descent. He then motioned to him to be silent, and proceeded with his queries.

"Although not of condition, you are, doubtless, by sentiments and education, a man of honour and a gentleman?"

"I hope so, sir," said Alan, colouring with displeasure. "I have not been accustomed to have it questioned."

"Patience, young man," said the unperturbed querist.—"we are on serious business, and beside etiquette must prevent its being discussed seriously.—You are probably aware, that you speak to a person prescribed by the severe and unjust laws of the present government?"

"I am aware of the statute 1700, chapter 3," said Alan, "banishing from the realm Priests and trafficking Popes, and punishing by death, on summary conviction, any such person who be ing so banished may return." But I have no means of knowing you, sir, to be one of those persons; and I think your prudence may recommend to you to keep your own counsel."

"It is sufficient, sir; and I have no apprehensions of disagreeable consequences from your having seen me in this house," said the Priest.

"Assuredly no," said Alan. "I consider myself as indebted for my life to the Mistress of Fairford; and it would be a vile requital on my part to pry into or make known what I may have seen or heard under this hospitable roof. If I were to meet the Pretender himself in such a situation, he should, even at the risk of a little stretch to my loyalty, be kept from any danger from my indiscretion."

"Then, I wonder!" said the Priest, with some abruptness; but immediately softened his tone and said, "No doubt, however, that persons of a pretence; and some people think his pretensions are not ill founded. But before running into politics, give me leave to say, that I am surprised at and a gentleman of your opinions in relation to this party with Mr Maxwell of Summertree and Mr. Macdonald, and the system of conducting the intercourse between them."

"Pardon me," said Alan Fairford; "I do not aspire to the rank of being reputed their confidant or adviser. My concern with these gentlemen is limited to one minute business, daily recurring to me, because it concerns the interests of my father's estate."

"How have you got connected with them?" said Father

Buonaventura. "My advice may be to you, and my influence with one or two gentlemen is considerable."

Fairford hesitated a moment, and hastily involving all circumstances, concluded that he might perhaps receive some advantage from propitiating this personage; while, on the other hand, he endangered nothing by acquainting him the occasion of his journey. He therefore, after stating shortly, that he hoped Mr Buonaventura would render him the same confidence which he required on his part, gave a short account of Daniel Bellimer—of the mystery which hung over his family—and of the disaster which had befallen him. Finally, of his own resolution to seek for his friend, and to deliver him, at the peril of his own life.

The Catholic Priest, whose manner it seemed to be to avoid all conversation which did not arise from his own express motion, made no remarks upon what he had heard, but only asked one or two abrupt questions, where Alan's narrative appeared less clear to him; then rising from his seat, he took two turns through the apartment, muttering between his teeth, with emphasis, the word "Madman!" But apparently he was in the habit of keeping all violent emotions under restraint; for he frequently addressed Fairford with the most perfect indifference.

"If," said he, "you thought you could do so without breach of confidence, I wish you would have the goodness to shew me the letter of Mr Maxwell of Summertree. I desire to look particularly at the address."

Sering no cause to decline this extension of his confidence, Alan, without hesitation, put the letter into his hand. Having turned it round as old Trumbull and Nanty Ewart had formerly done, and like them, having examined the address with much minuteness, he asked whether he had observed these words, pointing to a pencil-writing upon the under side of the letter. Fairford answered in the negative, and, looking at the letter, read with surprise, "*Cave ne literas Bellerophonis adferas*;" a caution which coincided so exactly with the Provost's admonition, that he would do well to inspect the letter of which he was bearer, that he was about to spring up and attempt an escape, he knew not whence, or from whom.

"Sit still, young man," said the Father, with the same tone of authority which reigned in his whole manner, although mingled with stately courtesy. "You are in no danger—my charge shall be a pledge for your safety.—By whom do you suppose these words have been written?"

Fairford could have answered, "By Nanty Ewart," for he remembered seeing that person scribble something with a pencil, although he was not well enough to observe with accuracy, where or upon what. But not knowing what suspicions, or what real consequences, the meaning of the interest in his affairs might draw upon him, he judged it best to answer that he knew not the writer.

Father Buonaventura then again took the argument of time which he considered in perusing the letter, and, after a short pause, said, "I have seen the whole of the letter, and I am satisfied that it is the work of a man of sense and of a man of courage. I am also satisfied that it is the work of a man of honour, and I am satisfied that it is the work of a man of God."

